

STARS AND STRIPES®

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new film tackles
euthanasia**

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dangers rise
during winter**

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plans perfect
for Fiesta**

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TUESDAY, JANUARY 4, 2005

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFFREY M. HARRIS
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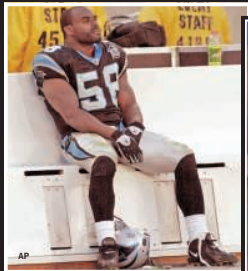
Relief begins arriving in hardest-hit areas

Rescue teams arrive in Sumatra; Powell to survey Asia tsunami damage

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NFL playoffs: Rams in, Vikings in (barely), Panthers left out

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Left: Carolina's Mark Fields sits alone on the bench after his team's season-ending 21-18 loss to the New Orleans Saints on Sunday. Center: Washington safety Sean Taylor (36) knocks a ball away from Minnesota receiver Randy Moss (84) during the Redskins' 21-10 win over the Vikings. Right: St. Louis Rams kicker Jeff Wilkins (14) boots the game-winning field goal in the Rams' 32-29 overtime victory against the Jets, guaranteeing his team a playoff spot.



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Cate Blanchett

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News Tracker ... What's new with old news

States

Suicide threat: Police detained a Chinese man who, apparently distraught over an immigration issue, approached a security booth outside U.N. headquarters and threatened to kill himself with a knife he held to his throat.

The man went to a booth at 43rd Street and First Avenue around noon Saturday.

A U.N. security guard called emergency services. New York police officers disarmed the man and detained him, a spokesman for the United Nations said. A U.N. translator was summoned to communicate with the man.

War on terrorism

Hassan awarded prize: The organizers of an Irish peace prize are posthumously giving the award to Margaret Hassan, a respected aid worker abducted and believed murdered in Iraq.

Hassan was being honored with the Tipperary International Peace Prize after paying "the ultimate price for her dedication to the poor and vulnerable in Iraq," organizers said late Saturday.

Irish-born Hassan, the Iraq director of aid agency CARE, was kidnapped in Baghdad in October. British officials say they believe she was killed, although no body has been found.

World

Sudan peace deal: The European Union offered \$545 million Sunday to Sudan following a peace agreement between the government and southern rebels, ending a 14-year freeze on development aid.

But it warned the release of the money over the next three years depends on the effective implementation of Friday's peace deal and increased efforts to end a separate conflict in Sudan's western Darfur region.

Myanmar prison releases: More than 5,500 convicts were freed Sunday from several labor camps on humanitarian grounds to commemorate Myanmar's independence day, the ruling military junta said.

A brief announcement on state radio and television news broadcasts said the 5,588 convicts were released "with the hope that those people will continue to work in the interest of the people and the country and to mark the 57th anniversary of Independence Day."

Drug lord arrest: Police said Saturday they have arrested one of Rio de Janeiro's most wanted drug lords.



Argentina nightclub fire: Relatives and friends of a victim of a Buenos Aires nightclub fire cry during a ceremony beside a grave Saturday. As the death toll crept higher to 188, anguished family members began burying victims of Thursday's fire, which investigators believe may have been sparked when someone in the crowd set off a flare that ignited the foam ceiling, transforming the indoor rock concert into a death-trap. Several hundred people protested outside the offices of Mayor Anibal Ibarra on Sunday, demanding tougher safety codes for rock clubs and a full government accounting for the country's worst fire in decades.

Eduino Eustaquio de Araujo Filho, who goes by the nickname Dudu, was arrested on charges of drug trafficking Friday night in an apartment in the suburbs of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Police Chief Alvaro Lins said.

The 33-year-old suspect had been monitored closely since August, when undercover police officers rented an apartment in the same building where his girlfriend lived.

Immigrant boat capsizes: A boat carrying Somali and Iranian migrants trying illegally to reach Greece capsized on Sunday, killing the captain and one migrant, the Anatolia news agency reported.

The Turkish Coast Guard rescued 12 other migrants in the Aegean Sea, off the coast of Ayvalik in northwest Turkey, and one migrant was missing, Anatolia reported.

The migrants were trying to reach the Greek island of Lesbos.

Haiti anniversary: Haiti's leaders marked

the country's 201st anniversary of independence Saturday while protesters demanded more help in this flood-ravaged city where political tensions still linger almost a year after a revolt that ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

In the northern city of Gonaves, where the country's declaration of independence from slave-holding France was signed Jan. 1, 1804, Interim President Boniface Alexandre urged Haitians to help pave the way for "free, honest, transparent and democratic elections" this year.

Czech influence in EU: Former President Vaclav Havel warned Sunday that if Czechs fail to ratify the European Union constitution, they will lose their influence over the process of European integration.

EU leaders signed the charter in October in Rome, following 28 months of acrimonious debate between governments of the 25 member states. All EU member countries must now ratify the constitution for it to come into force.

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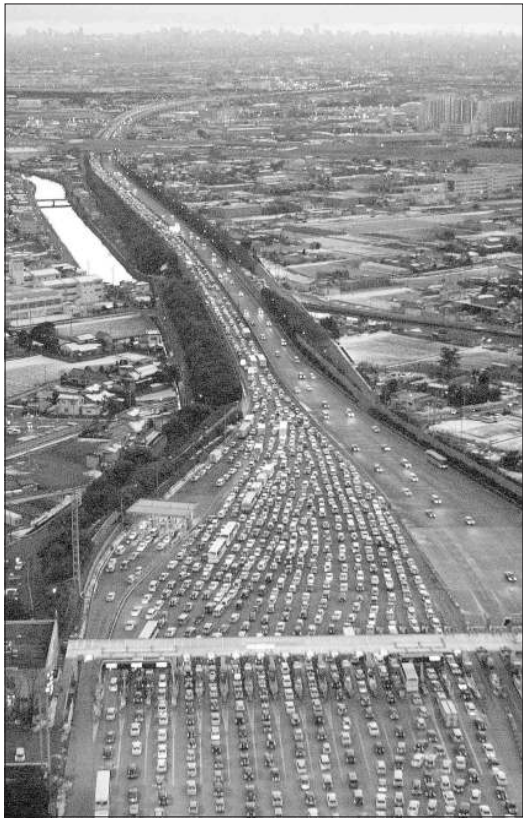
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The party's over



A tollgate is crowded with vehicles heading for Tokyo at Sango, near Tokyo, on Sunday. With the annual New Year's holiday season at an end, expressways around the metropolitan area were clogged with motorists returning from their hometowns.

KYODO NEWS/AP

U.S. and Indian armies plan series of joint exercises over two years

Stars and Stripes

The U.S. and Indian armies have planned a series of joint exercises over the next two years, U.S. Army Pacific officials announced this week.

The plan, officially signed Dec. 9 during a visit by the 9th Executive Steering Group to U.S. Army Pacific, includes continuation of the annual Exercise Yudh Abayas that is held annually both in India and the United States.

This year, the platoon-level exercise was held in India and Hawaii. Next year, a portion of the exercise will be held in Alaska and India. Security cooperation program activities also will be held on sub-

jects including aviation, medicine, logistics and others, according to the release.

"Having a close working relationship with the Indian Army is vital to the stability of the Asia-Pacific Theater," Lt. Gen. John M. Brown III, U.S. Army Pacific commander, stated in a news release announcing the joint exercises. "We have a very positive relationship with the Indian Army leadership and I'm enthusiastic about continuing the cooperative efforts that we have worked together to develop."

Each year the U.S. Army and the Indian Army use joint exercises, exchanges of subject-matter experts and seminars to promote mutual understanding and hone their ability to work together.

Off-base residents alerted to dangers of carbon monoxide

Kerosene or natural gas heaters could emit poisonous CO fumes

By JENNIFER H. SVAN

Stars and Stripes

MISAWA AIR BASE, Japan—As indoor heaters crank up this winter, base officials are reminding residents to be mindful of the dangers of carbon monoxide, an odorless, colorless and tasteless gas that can cause sudden illness and death.

Base medical officials would not say how many carbon monoxide cases they treat each winter, but they said it's a continuing issue.

"A lot of individuals come in, maybe a handful every winter" with symptoms of carbon monoxide overexposure, said Capt. Leslie Stapp, a 13th Fighter Squadron flight surgeon who works at the base hospital.

Stapp said that several months ago, 15 persons in a base choir group reported to the emergency room after accidentally inhaling carbon monoxide fumes while singing at an off-base church. Two with more severe symptoms were treated at a Japanese military base. The church's heating ventilation system appeared to be damaged, funneling carbon monoxide gas back into the building, Stapp said.

Created when fuel burns, carbon monoxide is the leading cause of poisoning death, accounting for more than 500 unintentional and 1,700 suicide deaths in the United States each year, according to the Iowa Statewide Poison Control Center.

Most who report to Misawa's emergency room with carbon monoxide sickness live off base, where most homes are heated with kerosene or natural gas, Stapp said.

Symptoms include headache, dizziness, weakness, nausea, vomiting, chest pain and confusion, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"It can literally put you to sleep without having too many symptoms," Stapp said. "You can become unconscious before you realize what's happening. A lot of people say they just feel like they're getting drunker and drunker. That's why it's so dangerous."

People who believe they've been exposed to carbon monoxide should seek fresh air and medical treatment immediately, Stapp said. Hyperbaric oxygen treatment is used in more severe cases. Newsday.com reported in a December 2004 online article that hyperbaric treatment takes place in a sealed chamber with portholes. Patients breathe in pressurized oxygen — a treatment of being 66 feet under water — that dissolves carbon monoxide in the red blood cells.

Misawa's base hospital has what's referred to as a hyperbaric module — it's like a chamber but smaller, Stapp said.

Patients also may be hooked to an oxygen machine to alleviate symptoms.

"Because people may be sensitive to their medical treatment, we just don't discuss numbers," said Capt. Daniel Roberts, chief of the Human Performance Training Team, 35th Medical Group, in explaining why hospital officials would not discuss how many people they've treated this winter and last for carbon monoxide exposure.

But carbon monoxide sickness "is a factor here," he said. "It has been a factor and will probably continue to be a factor."

Maj. Monte Harner, 35th Civil Engineer Squadron operations flight commander, said several precautions can help keep homes safe.

Americans' off-base homes in Misawa most commonly are heated by portable kerosene heaters or natural gas- or kerosene-fueled furnaces, he said.

With a pre-installed heating unit that vents to the outside, residents should ensure snow or other debris hasn't blocked the vents. "If it is blocked, carbon monoxide will be forced back into the house," Harner said.

The landlord should be involved in checking vents periodically, Harner said. "The standard off-base lease states the landlord is responsible for maintenance and upkeep of the heaters. They should schedule safety checks and regular cleanings of the heaters and propane gas ranges."

Although some houses already come with a carbon monoxide alarm, usually installed next to the stove, Harner said keeping at least one tester near the sleeping area is smart. Misawa's base exchange sells combination carbon monoxide and smoke detectors for about \$35.

Heaters in newly built homes should shut off automatically if carbon monoxide is detected, but having a backup still is a good idea, Harner said.

Although no carbon monoxide is produced when heat is turned on in base housing — the system runs on steam — base residents need to be careful with portable heaters using kerosene or other combustible fossil fuels, Harner said.

"Make sure you purchase one that can be vented to the outside. It should have a vent tube that you can run to a window," he said.

E-mail Jennifer H. Svan at: svan@spstripes.osd.mil

Aid starts flowing to hardest-hit regions

Fisherman found alive, but odds of finding more survivors dwindle

The Associated Press

BANDA ACEH, Indonesia — An Indonesian fisherman trapped under his boat in Asia's tsunami disaster was found alive but severely dehydrated Sunday, even as rescue workers conceded that the thousands missing were probably dead a week after a thunderous earthquake triggered killer waves across the region. An estimated 150,000 were killed.

The discovery of 24-year-old Tengku Sofyan, who could barely speak and was hospitalized in serious condition in Banda Aceh on Indonesia's Sumatra island, came as relief efforts accelerated across the southern Asian destruction zone.

Rescue teams homed in on the epicenter of the devastation in Sumatra, where U.S. military helicopters flew in biscuits, energy drinks and instant noodles to hungry, homeless villagers. The operation was part of a global \$2 billion effort announced ahead of an international donors' conference scheduled in the Indonesian capital, Jakarta, on Thursday.

The relief efforts drove deeper into the sprawling disaster zone: American pilots had some of the first glimpses of wrecked Sumatran coastal villages such as Kuede Tenom, where threadbare survivors grabbed at bottles of water dropped from helicopters.

In Banda Aceh, witnesses said Sofyan was at sea when the tsunami hit Dec. 26. His boat was tossed onto the beach at Lampulo and he was trapped for a week and couldn't eat or drink anything, they said. Sofyan, the first missing victim discovered alive since Friday, was being given intravenous fluids.

"He's in extremely fragile condition, especially mentally," said Dr. Irwan Azwar, who treated the man.

After a week of digging through rubble in hopes of find-

ing survivors of the Dec. 26 catastrophe, which hit coasts from Malaysia to Somalia, workers had begun saying on Sunday that hopes of miraculous discoveries were quickly dwindling. Despite Sofyan's discovery, the likelihood of further rescues was growing dim with time.

"There is very little chance of finding survivors after seven days," said Lamsar Sipahutar, the head of the search team in Indonesia, the hardest-hit nation with an expected death toll of 100,000. "We are about to stop the search-and-rescue operations. 'If you survived the earthquake, you probably were killed by tsunami.'"

In India, which suffered more than 9,000 deaths, officials insisted there was still hope for survivors, but the search was essentially over in Tamil Nadu state, the southern region that bore the brunt of the country's sea surge. Veera Shanmuga Moni, a top administrator of Tamil Nadu's Nagapattinam district, said some 600 people on the missing list would soon be declared dead.

The official tally of dead from the catastrophe surpassed 123,000. But with tens of thousands still missing and presumed dead, U.N. officials said they expected the actual toll would exceed 150,000, although the exact tally will probably never be known. Five million people were left homeless by the waves.

The scope of the relief effort — like the disaster — was tremendous.

The American military was mounting its largest operation in southern Asia since the Vietnam War, delivering supplies from the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln stationed off Sumatra and sending a flotilla of Marines and water purifying equipment to Sri Lanka.

Four Indonesian navy frigates loaded with supplies arrived off the coast of the fishing village of



Displaced people ask for rice from an aid distribution truck at Nagapattinam, in the Southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu, on Saturday.

Meulaboh, one of Aceh's worst-hit spots. About half the town of 40,000 was destroyed. An Associated Press reporter who visited could see fewer than 100 residents searching for food among destroyed homes along the coast.

Health officials in the disaster zone said no medical crisis has yet emerged, although getting clean water and sanitation to hard-hit areas was an urgent priority to prevent outbreaks of disease.

Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra visited Phuket on Sunday, hoping to prop up a tourism industry that is critical to the country's economy and pledging to set up a tsunami early-warning system that scientists say could have saved many lives had it been in place a week ago.

"Nice to meet you, enjoy your stay," Thaksin told tourists who had returned to battered Patong beach. "We'll try and make your stay happy."

100 Marines from Hawaii to deploy to south Asia

The Associated Press

HONOLULU — More Hawaii military personnel are being deployed to south Asia to assist in the tsunami relief effort.

About 100 Kaneohe-based Marines and six helicopters will leave "in the coming days," according to a Marine Corps statement. The Marines are from the Heavy Helicopter Squadron 363 and the Aviation Logistic Squadron 24, both part of Marine Aircraft Group 24.

The six Sea Stallion helicopters will be flown to Asia on a C-5 Galaxy cargo aircraft.

No date has been set for the Marines' return, the statement said.

The Coast Guard also said a C-130 airplane from Barbers Point would leave Sunday morning with emergency supplies and Coast Guard personnel from Alameda, Calif., who will help make assessments of clean-up requirements and long-term support.

The cargo was to include food, water, and emergency medical and shelter supplies, the Coast Guard said.

Two specialized teams comprised of military and civilian specialists in the fields of mortuary affairs and forensic science left Hawaii Wednesday night for Thailand. A Pearl Harbor-based Navy Environmental and Preventive Medicine unit, including epidemiologists, entomologists and microbiologists, was to leave Sunday.

Powell defends U.S. response to catastrophe

Secretary of state travels to Southeast Asia to see what more Americans can do to help

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Secretary of State Colin Powell on Sunday reaffirmed the U.S. commitment to tsunami relief efforts and defended the Bush administration's response to what he called one of the world's worst catastrophes ever.

Powell, who was departing about midday for a firsthand assessment of the situation in South Asia, planned to meet with leaders in the region to see what more the United States can do.

This is "one of the most massive relief efforts ever mounted in response to one of the worst catastrophes the world has ever seen," Powell said on NBC's "Meet the Press."

The secretary was quick to defend the administration's efforts against criticism from U.N. officials and members of Congress who said the United States was slow to respond with financial aid.

“[This is] one of the most massive relief efforts ever mounted in response to one of the worst catastrophes the world has ever seen.”

Colin Powell

U.S. secretary of state

"It's been seven days and in seven days, we have launched a carrier battle group. We have launched an amphibious battle group. We have contributed \$350 million. We have assessment teams all over. We have energized the private sector. We have put together a core group that has assisted these nations. The nations involved are very pleased," he

said.

In the first days after the massive earthquake and tsunami, the United States pledged \$35 million, which critics called meager considering the vast wealth of the nation.

President Bush decided Friday to increase that aid to \$350 million.

During his trip to Asia, Powell said he will focus on assessing the needs of the countries hit by the tsunami.

One of the biggest problems, he said, was delivering the aid to the most devastated areas.

He also would look at what will be required for reconstruction efforts and that the U.S. contribution may go beyond the \$350 million.

Powell was to visit Indonesia, site of the largest loss of life, and Thailand. He also said he hoped to make a stop in Sri Lanka.

The president's brother, Florida Gov. Jeb Bush, was among the U.S. officials and experts accompanying Powell on the trip.



MEET THE PRESS/AP

Secretary of State Colin Powell talks about his upcoming trip to Asia during the taping of "Meet The Press" at the NBC studios in Washington on Sunday.

Indonesia reels claim military is using disaster to step up offensive

BY MICHAEL CASEY

The Associated Press

JAKARTA, Indonesia — Indonesia's military is using the recent earthquake and tsunami as an excuse to ratchet up its campaign against separatist rebels and is denying aid to anyone it suspects of sympathizing with their cause, a spokesman for the Free Aceh Movement said Sunday.

Meanwhile, a prominent student group in Aceh urged authorities Sunday to lift a state of emergency in the region and abandon the military offensive against separatist rebels.

"The government of Indonesia has to end the military approach to resolve the conflict that creates the suffering of the Acehnese," said a statement by SIRI, a student group campaigning for an independence referendum in the province of 4 million people.

The Free Aceh Movement, or GAM—a rebel group fighting for independence since 1976—announced a unilateral truce in its war with Indonesian forces because of the Dec. 26 earthquake and tsunami that killed 80,000 people in the province.

But government troops have continued anti-insurgency actions in Aceh, on Sumatra island's northern tip. Troops killed three rebels and detained five others in northern Aceh on Saturday, accusing them of trying to attack a relief convoy, state-run news agency Antara said.

Bakhtiar Abdullah, a Sweden-based GAM spokesman, denied that rebels attacked any convoy.

He said the military had

poured troops into the region since the disaster in an effort to wipe out the rebels. He also said rebel sympathizers in refugee camps were harassed and tortured.

"The reports we received is that they are moving in more troops under the guise of relief operations," Abdullah said.

"We know that they are trying to track down GAM fighters in the area," he said. "We have given strict orders to maintain a cease-fire and hope that the Indonesian military would respect that cease-fire and refrain from any military action."

A military spokesman, Col. Ahmad Yani Basuki, acknowledged that operations against the rebels were continuing and that more troops have been sent to Aceh. But he said the government had reassigned two-thirds of all the troops to disaster relief.

"We have to maintain security operations to prevent the rebels from attacking vital installations and relief operations," he said.

National Police Chief Gen. I. Bachtiar, on a visit to Aceh on Saturday, said the disaster had killed more than 1,000 troops and police. Some were still missing, he said.

After the quake and tsunami hit the province last week, Jakarta let foreign relief workers and journalists into the province for the first time since May 2003, when its forces abandoned a six-month truce, launching a massive offensive against the guerrillas that has left thousands dead.

But Jakarta has so far refused to lift a state of "civil emergency," which effectively lets military and police operate unimpeded in the oil- and gas-rich region.



AP photos

Indian defense personnel walk near the debris of the Indian air force officer's colony, which was destroyed by the tsunami that killed more than 100 officers in Car Nicobar, in India's Andaman and Nicobar islands.

Gandhi statue is all that remains of Indian village

BY NEELESH MISRA

The Associated Press



A statue of Mahatma Gandhi stands among debris of Malacca village, which was destroyed by the tsunami in Car Nicobar.

MALACCA, India — He stood in stone as the tsunami pounded this remote tropical paradise, killing stunned villagers and turning their homes into heaps of debris.

A statue of Mahatma Gandhi, the father of India's freedom movement, was the only structure still standing in the once-bustling village of Malacca on the Indian island of Car Nicobar, where survivors on Sunday were still desperately waiting for relief.

The Gandhi statue survived under a white canopy of concrete, now surrounded by a pile of bricks, wooden planks, windows, bicycles, twisted motorcycles, clothes and books.

"Malacca dead. Gone," said Bradford, 70, one of the oldest residents of the Nicobarese tribal village. Like many on the southern

archipelago of Andaman and Nicobar, Bradford uses one name.

Twelve of the 15 villages of Car Nicobar, one of the most secluded of the islands in the Bay of Bengal, were flattened under the Dec. 26 tsunami that ravaged 4.5 miles of the island in its first sweep. The other three villages suffered extensive damage from a 7.3-magnitude earthquake that rocked the region after a magnitude-9 temblor rolled the seas off Indonesia.

India's official death toll in the disaster stood at 9,067.

According to government figures, 812 bodies had been buried or cremated in the islands.


"Entire villages have been washed out," said Indian army Brig. J.M. Devadoss, relief commander for the island of some 20,000 people, which lies about 185 miles south of Port Blair, the capital of the island chain.

Amid the misery, a measure of hope emerged across this island with a breathtaking view of the blue seas and a shoreline draped in coconut trees. For the first time since the tsunami, a naval ship was able to dock with hundreds of tons of food, medicine, clothes and other rations.

"This is the biggest relief effort in the history of India," Sri Prakash Jaiswal, junior home minister, told The Associated Press in Port Blair on Sunday before accompanying journalists to Car Nicobar. "I still have hopes that there will be survivors among the missing people."

Devadoss said it was too early to estimate casualties on Car Nicobar, where they hope some indigenous tribes took to the hills and are surviving on coconuts. Several thousands have since taken ships to the Indian mainland.

"Everyone in my office has fled, right now I am the highest ranking official in the Transport Department here," said bus driver Mohammed Hussain.



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At Fussa Gate: Left on 16 to light. Turn right. Take next light. Church on left.

Hope fades of identifying foreigners

BY KEITH B. RICHBURG

The Washington Post

BANGKOK — With thousands of decomposing bodies piled up in a Buddhist temple that has been converted to a temporary morgue on Thailand's southern coast, hope was fading Saturday that any of more than 6,000 foreigners still missing after last Sunday's tsunami would be found alive.

The hardest-hit area in Thailand now appears to be Khao Lak, north of Phuket island, a popular spot for families with children, particularly Scandinavians. Another 1,600 bodies, most believed to be foreigners, were collected and brought Saturday from Khao Lak to the temple at Takua Pa. Many were so bloated and disfigured that identification would be nearly impossible, said witnesses.

Thai authorities said Saturday that 4,812 people, including 2,230 foreigners, were confirmed dead in Thailand. Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra said that toll could reach 10,000.

In a globalized tragedy that struck tourists as well as residents, the hardest-hit country outside the tsunami zone was Sweden. The official count of Swedes missing in Thailand stood at 3,559, mostly at Khao Lak and Ko Phi Phi, a small island that has been popular with younger people.

Only 20 Swedes were found in hospitals, 60 others were confirmed dead and 5,000 others were evacuated to Sweden.

"Khao Lak is mostly for families, so at Khao Lak there are a lot of children missing," said Jane Axelsson, 39, a Swedish volunteer helping the consulate in Takua Pa deal with the influx of anxious relatives searching for loved ones. But at Khao Lak, many of the missing would have been swept off the beach during morning swims, she said.

"On Phi Phi, the culture is to stay awake long into the night, and sleep late in the morning," she said. There, teenagers and young people would have succumbed to the waves while still in bed, she said.

Members of the Swedish Church in Thailand have visited all the hospitals and reported that no hospitalized Swedes were left unidentified. That dashed hopes of incoming family members who clung to the belief that relatives might have been injured but were unconscious or unable to call home.

The Swedish government Saturday asked all family members missing a relative to bring identity documents of the relatives and to bring recent photographs. Final identification will likely rely on DNA testing, which officials warned could take months. "Not all of them

will be identified," Axelsson said. "That is the reality we have to face today."

Thai students have arrived in the stricken areas to assist incoming relatives, mostly by helping with translation. Some of the students have been wearing large name cards showing which languages besides Thai they speak.

But at the Phuket city hall Saturday, Thai officials told foreigners flocking to the resort that it was time to give up searching for their loved ones and consider leaving, according to the Reuters news agency. A Thai Tourist Police lieutenant used a megaphone to tell relatives: "Please tell your friends not to come. ... The bodies are no longer identifiable."

Axelsson and others have called this Sweden's biggest tragedy since World War II. Already, there is political fallout in the Scandinavian country, as newspaper columnists and some politicians accuse the government of moving too slowly in the first hours of the disaster.

Laila Freivalds, the Swedish foreign minister, visited Thailand's devastated beach resort areas and later conceded that the government had initially failed to grasp the scope of the calamity. "We ought to have taken much more forceful action on Sunday, instead of waiting," she said at a news conference. "Some of the completely wiped-out tourist resorts are those where many Swedes were staying."

Gang rape of teen

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka — A teenager who escaped death but was left orphaned and homeless by the Asian tsunami met yet one more agony: gang rape, one of several cases of child abuse being investigated in the disaster zone, an official said.

Of all the human tragedies emerging from the worst natural disaster in decades, sexual abuse of vulnerable children in refugee camps must be among the most shocking.

But experts say it is not uncommon in times of conflict and trauma.

"When there is displacement and chaos, the possibility of this type of behavior is higher," Harendra de Silva, head of the National Child Protection Authority, said Saturday.

Prisoners surrender

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka — About 100 prisoners who were released from their Sri Lanka cells to escape the tsunami have voluntarily surrendered. Two hundred others remain at large, prison authorities said Sunday.

About 100 other prisoners were taken from the Matara prison to another lockup before the waves hit.

"If the doors weren't open for them, they would have all died," said Kummy Marzook, warden of Sri Lanka's Matara prison, 80 miles south of Colombo.

Arrest suspect in hoax

LONDON — British police said Sunday they have arrested a suspect in connection with hoax e-mails that informed people their missing loved ones died in the Asian tsunami.

The messages, which claimed to be from the British government, were sent to friends and relatives who placed appeals for information on the Sky News TV Web site.

London's Metropolitan Police said officers investigating the case had arrested a 40-year-old man Friday in Lincolnshire county in central England and seized computer equipment.

Lesson helped save lives

LONDON — A British schoolgirl who recognized the signs of a coming tsunami thanks to a recent geography lesson saved her family and some 100 other tourists at a Thai beach, a British newspaper reported.

Tilly Smith, 10, realized they were in danger when she saw the tide suddenly rush out — an indication earthquake-driven waves are only minutes away — and told her mother, The Sun said in its Saturday edition.

She explained that she had studied tsunamis only two weeks before at her school in Oxshott, just south of London. Her parents, Penny and Colin Smith, warned vacationers and staff at their hotel in Phuket, and the hotel swiftly evacuated Maikhaio beach, minutes before the devastating waves struck, the newspaper said.

The Sun reported that the beach was one of only a few in Phuket where no one was killed or seriously hurt.

"I was on the beach and the water started to go funny," Tilly was quoted as telling The Sun.

From The Associated Press

Elephants help to clear tsunami debris in Thailand



AP photos

Elephants clear debris near Bang Nieng beach in Khao Lak, Thailand, on Sunday. Elephants were part of a huge effort to clean Thailand's southern coastline as the country's death toll climbed close to 5,000 a week after the tsunami disaster.

U.N. warns infectious diseases may claim more lives

BY EMMA ROSS

The Associated Press

JAKARTA, Indonesia — The key to averting a health catastrophe emerging from the tsunami ruins will be basic hygiene — clean water and toilets — medical officials said, warning the worst may be just around the corner.

Dirty drinking and washing water combined with lack of proper sewage disposal, they said, are a recipe for explosive outbreaks of life-threatening diarrhea diseases such as cholera, typhoid and dysentery, as well as some forms of hepatitis.

"These are the sort of diseases that could occur any time now," Dr. Michelle Gayer, an infectious diseases specialist at the World Health Organization, said Saturday.

More than 123,000 people are reported dead and officials say the toll is likely to climb as more bodies are found. Most of the victims were killed by the massive tsunamis that smashed coastlines after a magnitude 9.0 earthquake last Sunday off Indonesia's coast.

However, the United Nations has warned that disease may claim almost as many lives.

Hospitals left standing after Asia's killer tsunami haven't been swamped by severely injured survivors. Most casualties either have light wounds or are dead.

But sources of clean water and sanitary toilets have been largely wiped out in many areas by the devastation of the tsunami in Southeast Asia.

The waterborne illnesses threatening the region are caused by bugs in traces of feces,

which can easily end up in the mouth not only when people don't wash their hands before eating or preparing food, but also if plates and utensils are washed in sewage-contaminated water.

A common way that such diseases get spread is by fetching buckets of water from rivers and lakes where people bathe and defecate.

According to the World Food Program, there have been no reports of starvation in tsunami-stricken areas, and experts say they don't expect a threat of starvation. There are food shortages in many areas, but not critical shortages.

However, a nutrition problem is emerging in the worst hit location at the northern tip of Sumatra, the Indonesian island nearest to the epicenter of the quake, said Dr. Georg Petersen, the WHO representative in Indonesia.

Amid deadly waves, two babies persevere

BY NEELESH MISRA
The Associated Press

PORT BLAIR, Andaman and Nicobar Islands — As she fled the killer waves swallowing her island, Namita Roy gave birth to a boy in a forest.

On another island, 8-month-old Michael Jeremiah slipped out of his mother's arms and sank into the sea until his father saw his toe poke up from the waves and brought him back to life.

The babies' tales will become part of the folklore of miraculous survivals of last week's catastrophic earthquake and tsunami.

"It's all God's grace," said Lakshmi Narayan Roy, 34, a rickshaw puller whose wife, Namita, delivered their baby in the forest on Hut Bay island, where they were taking shelter.

Roy had just made tea for his wife, who was expecting her baby on Jan. 15. Then the earth shook, and Roy raced out of the house with his pregnant wife and their 6-year-old son, Saurabh.

Roy put Namita on his bicycle rickshaw and began hugging her uphill. Minutes later, Roy's home was flattened, like hundreds of others on the island.

Hours later, as they and 700 other people hunkered down on the highest point of

the island, in the dark forest, Namita began having pains.

Just after 4 a.m. on Monday, the baby was coming. Women scrambled, putting up walls of saris they had saved from their homes. More water was heated from wood on twigs and dry leaves. At 4:19 a.m., the Roy's second son was born.

But the jungle delivery was crude and Namita had lost a lot of fluid. They went down the hill on the rickshaw to a medical center. There, a navy officer alerted a ship.

But the tsunami had smashed the jetty and the ship couldn't get to shore. Roy and his friends lifted the new mother above their heads and carried her through the waist-deep water; another friend followed with the baby.

In a Port Blair hospital, a doctor named the boy Tsunami.

"I like the name. I won't change it," said Namita Roy, swaddling her son in a towel. "I will remember that day forever," Lakshmi Roy said. "I am sure he will fight with me when he grows up, though, for giving him a feminine name."

Hundreds of miles south, on the island of Chovra, coconut plantation owner Jeremiah, his wife, Safra, teenage daughter Lilian and 8-month-old Michael were on their way to church in their village of Kuitasul.

"We had planned we would all pray to-



Tsunami, a 6-day-old boy, rests in the lap of his mother, Namita Roy, in a refugee camp in Port Blair, in India's south-eastern Andaman and Nicobar Islands, on Saturday. A doctor named the baby after he was born in the forest, where his mother fled the killer waves.

AP

gether. But suddenly, the earth started shaking," said Safra, who, like her husband, uses a single name. They all started running, but the temblor and tsunami had ripped up the road running along the coast.

Suddenly, they found themselves floating in the water, helplessly being flung toward debris, hurtling past furniture and TVs from their home. Safra, exhausted,

said she lost her grip on Michael and watched in horror as he drifted away.

Another wave came and Michael sank below the surface. "We wanted to die as well, just flow away with the water," Safra said. Then Jeremiah yelled: "The toe! The toe!" Jeremiah lunged forward and grabbed his son's toe, and lifted him up.

All three survived to rejoin other family members.



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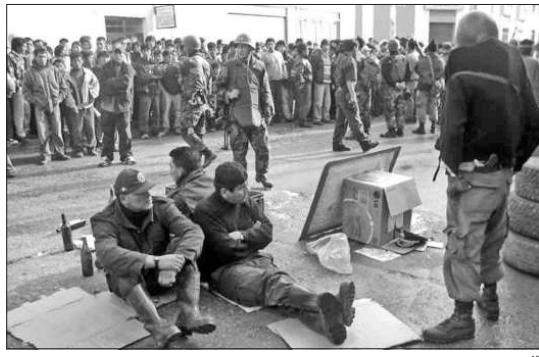
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IN THE WORLD



Three Peruvian police hostages sit on the street as a group of national dissidents dressed in military-style uniforms stand guard in the remote town in Andahuaylas, 275 miles south of Lima, on Saturday.

Militants ambush officers sent to end siege in Peru

BY RICK VECCHIO
The Associated Press

LIMA, Peru — Gunmen belonging to a nationalist group that seized a police station in remote southern Peru ambushed a police vehicle responding to the scene Sunday, killing four officers and wounding several more, hospital officials said. One gunman was gravely wounded.

The shooting started before dawn on a bridge on the other side of town from the captured police station in Andahuaylas, 275 miles southeast of Lima, Radiogramas radio reported.

The station was seized Saturday by followers of Antauro Humala, a retired army major who, along with his brother, seeks to establish a nationalist indigenous movement modeled on the ancient Inca Empire.

The attackers demanded the resignation of President Alejandro Toledo. At least seven people were wounded in a shootout during the takeover early Saturday and brought to Lima. Authorities said Humala was holding at least 10 police hostages.

Humala on Sunday denied that his men ambushed police, insisting they had repelled a surprise attack by authorities.

"The police this morning attacked an advance post of reservists on the colonial bridge that we control, along with various blocks of the town of Andahuaylas," Humala told CPN radio. "They attacked with silencers and we had one casualty."

He said Peruvian security forces had underestimated his followers, who he described as "decorated war heroes" from Peru's 1958 border war with Ecuador.

"We are open to dialogue," he said. "The ones who are not open to dialogue are here, the security forces. They simply came here to attack us with silencers."

Toledo, who refused the demand to resign, declared a 30-day state of emergency in the remote Andean province. He cut short a holiday trip to convene a Cabinet meeting on the crisis.

A state of emergency suspends basic constitutional rights such as freedom of assembly, permits authorities to enter homes without search warrants and authorizes the president to charge the armed forces with maintaining order.

Officials at two hospitals told Peruvian media the death toll from Sunday's ambush included a police captain, a lieutenant and two officers.

Humala is the brother of Ollanta Humala, an army commander stationed in South Korea whom the government retired last week.

In October 2000, Lt. Col. Ollanta Humala and his brother led 50 followers in a short-lived military uprising, a month before the collapse of former President Alberto Fujimori's corruption-ridden, 10-year regime. Antauro Humala had been forced to retire from the army three years earlier.

New currency in Turkey

ISTANBUL, Turkey — Turkey launched a new currency Saturday by dropping six zeros from the old one, in a sign of progress in its decades-long struggle with inflation. But getting rid of old habits in a country where even a loaf of bread costs hundreds of thousands isn't likely to be easy.

No major problems were reported after the new Turkish lira went into circulation, although credit cards were unusable for about five minutes while the transition was made.

Bank machines were also distributing the new currency, but few on the street appeared to have made the switch. The old notes will remain usable for a year, but the Central Bank predicts they will largely be out of circulation by the end of February.

Chinese car imports

DETROIT — A Chinese automaker will begin exporting cars to the United States, with a goal of selling 250,000 in 2007, according to the head of the company that plans to market them.

Chery Automobile Co., owned

by the Chinese government, has signed a deal with the privately held Visionary Vehicles LLC of New York to sell the cars in the United States, said Malcolm Bricklin, Visionary's chief executive. Bricklin is best known for bringing the Yugo and the Subaru to the United States.

It would be the first deal to import Chinese-made cars to the United States, the Detroit News said in its Sunday editions.

Chery is China's eighth-largest automaker. Founded in 1997, it sold about 90,000 vehicles in China in 2004.

From The Associated Press

Abbas vies for rebel support at Gaza rally

BY ISRAHIM BARZAK
The Associated Press

DEIR EL-BALAH, Gaza Strip — Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas told hundreds of armed militants at a campaign rally in Gaza on Sunday that he would never abandon them, but would fight to protect them from Israeli raids.

In his campaign to replace Yasser Arafat, Abbas is courting support from gunmen considered heroes by many Palestinians and terrorists by most Israelis.

Israeli troops, meanwhile, concluded a three-day operation in southern Gaza early Sunday just as they began one in northern Gaza.

Israel says it was targeting militants who fire homemade rockets and mortar rounds at Israeli towns and settlements. Three Israeli civilians were wounded in such attacks Sunday, one seriously.

In southern Gaza, Israel pulled out of Khan Younis, leaving at least 13 armed Palestinians dead, the army said. Palestinian security officials put the number of dead at 11 and said nine of them were armed.

Soon after, about 40 Israeli tanks and armored cars rumbled into agricultural areas outside the northern Gaza towns of Beit Hanoun, Beit Lahiya and Jabalya.

The raids came as candidates campaigned in Gaza early Sunday for Jan. 9 elections for a new president of the Palestinian Authority.

Though Abbas is the overwhelming favorite, he lacks Arafat's charisma and street credentials. Even if he posts a strong victory, he will need to consolidate his support among the population and get militants to back his new government.

Israel has demanded a crackdown on violent groups, which Abbas has repeatedly rejected.

In an interview Saturday, Abbas said Palestinians are beholden to the gunmen for their resistance against the Israeli occupation and have a duty to protect them from reprisals.

At a rally Sunday in the central Gaza town of Deir el-Balah, Abbas pledged to

defend thousands of Palestinians, including hundreds of gunmen, not to abandon them. Abbas also promised to follow in Arafat's footsteps, saying he would not rest until an independent Palestinian state is established. Israeli settlements are dismantled and Palestinian refugees get their rights.

"The principles of Yasser Arafat, in his sayings, are the will and it is our duty to implement it," Abbas said.

Elections the main event in Middle East this year

BY SARAH EL DEEB
The Associated Press

CAIRO, Egypt — From Baghdad to Cairo, from Riyadh to the Gaza Strip, election is the mantra for 2005.

Iraqis, Palestinians, Egyptians, even Saudis will be going to the polls, giving them a new sense of power in a region largely run by monarchs and dictators, even in places where parliaments exist.

But some say it doesn't necessarily signal real change.

"Elections is a magic word. You have got the magic word but you don't have magic without delivering," said Saudi analyst Mai Yamani, with the Royal Institute of International Affairs in London. "I don't think there is any significance unless there is genuine intent to reform, share of power, minimize the power of the ruling elite, end corruption."

Fahreddin Alwazir, a liberal Islamic thinker in Egypt, says the Jan. 9 Palestinian election is the only one where there are real political players and the possibility of change.

In Iraq, Egypt and Saudi Arabia, he's just "painting the house," he said. "The results are known and there will be no fundamental

change ... a soap opera, a response to American pressure, and not a result of popular demand or a strong political challenge. There is no political struggle."

After topping Saddam Hussein in 2003, the United States promised Iraq would become a model for Arab democracy, and pressured regimes in the region to yield to some local demands for reform. Reform, Washington holds, will make Muslim and Arab societies less fertile ground for extremists.

But many question whether elections under occupation (Iraq, West Bank and Gaza Strip) or under foreign pressure (Saudi Arabia) can really prompt change in the region.

Iraqis are scheduled to vote Jan. 30 in the first free elections since the overthrow of their monarchy in 1958, choosing a legislative assembly to draft a constitution.

The Palestinians are voting for a successor to the late Yasser Arafat, who controlled Palestinian politics for more than 40 years.

In the Saudi capital, Riyadh, billboard messages prepare citizens for the kingdom's first nationwide elections, for municipal councils.

Abbas

Yushchenko faces tough tasks in Ukraine

BY MARA D. BELLAMY
The Associated Press

KIEV, Ukraine — Like most Ukrainian university students, Olena Prokhorova can earn a passing grade two ways: slog away at her studies or pay a bribe of about \$19.

Ukrainian traffic cops are so notorious for soliciting bribes when they pull cars over that drivers joke their initials "DAI" actually stands for the command "Give me!"

Corruption is so pervasive that Ukrainians say they do not even give it a second thought most of the time.

"We almost don't even consider it corruption," said Prokhorova, a 19-year-old university student from the western city of Lviv.

Public worn down by corruption, bribes

Viktor Yushchenko, the opposition leader who appears to have won last week's court-ordered presidential revote, has pledged to make the fight against corruption the first goal of his presidency.

The task won't be an easy one.

Transparency International's 2004 ranking of corrupt nations lists Ukraine as one of the worst — No. 128 out of 146, nestled between Sudan and Cameroon.

There's evidence that corruption led to fraud in the second-round presidential vote on Nov. 21. Hundreds of thousands of opposition supporters like Prokhorova massed in Kiev after that balloting to protest not only

what they said was their stolen votes but also the underlying corruption. The Supreme Court later annulled the results, citing mass fraud, and ordered the Dec. 26 revote.

This summer, some of the world's biggest steel companies cried foul after Ukraine's main steel producer Kryvorizstal was sold to a company controlled by outgoing President Leonid Kuchma's son-in-law, even though his bid was significantly lower than the bids offered by others.

But it is the little bribes — to a university teacher, doctors, judges, traffic cops — that have outraged this nation of 48 million.

Svetlana Borydyla, 47, said it is

common practice to bring a box of chocolates to the state medical clinic — it guarantees a gentler touch and more time with the physician than for someone who turns up empty-handed.

"Ninety-nine percent of Ukrainian citizens feel corruption impact on their lives," said Petro Poroshenko, a lawmaker and one of Yushchenko's closest allies. "It is awful. We think that during the next two or three months, it will be our main problem."

Nadezhda Ionavna said her general store in Kaniv, in south-central Ukraine, was subjected to regular visits by tax police and never-ending checks by environmental, fire, sanitary inspectors.

Many inspectors come expecting something for themselves.

"It wears you down," she said. With his rival, Viktor Yanukovich, refusing to concede defeat, and with little support in Ukraine's industrial east, Yushchenko — who can't be officially declared president until all appeals are exhausted — must not portray himself as fed up for revenge, said political analyst Ina Pidluska.

But Prokhorova — who has spent more than a month living in the opposition's sprawling tent camp on Kiev's main avenue — wants speedy changes.

When she returns to Lviv, she vowed not to hand over \$1 for every missed class — the usual rate.

"I won't pay it. That's not why I'm out here. That's not what we are fighting for," she said.

Saudi man criticized for getting married 58 times

While Islamic law allows 4 wives, polygamy's popularity is fading

BY DONNA ABU-NASR
The Associated Press

USFAN, Saudi Arabia — In 50 years, he says, he has married 58 women and has forgotten the names of most of them. He knows he has had 10 sons, but ask about daughters and he counts on his fingers: 22. No, no, 28. No, that's too many. He settles on 25.

Saleh al-Sayeri, a 64-year-old

shepherd-turned-businessman, says his marital adventures have cost him more than \$1.6 million in wedding expenses and settlements for divorced wives.

"Marriage doesn't bore me," he said, relaxing on cushions at a carpeted, open-air reception area in his 22-horse stable in Usfan, in the desert 500 miles west of Riyadh. "I'm the happiest man in the world."

Al-Sayeri's story might seem a bizarre curiosity, but it touches a nerve in Saudi Arabia, the status of whose women is a matter of international controversy.

When it surfaced in Saudi media in March, some readers reacted angrily.

A woman who identified herself as Maryam, a convert to Islam, wrote to the Arab News, an English-language daily, that

al-Sayeri's story "really sent me over the edge."

Sayidat magazine, which interviewed al-Sayeri, also spoke to psychiatrist Mona Al-Sawwaf who said al-Sayeri, does not treat a wife as a human being "but as a piece of clothing he can change whenever he pleases or an object."

"The biggest blame lies with the parents" who let their daughters enter such marriages, she said.

Al-Sayeri dismisses such critics as "crazy," insisting he is not breaching Islamic laws, which permit a man to have four wives at a time.

None of Al-Sayeri's ex-wives could be reached. He said many have remarried, but to reveal their identity would be a gross violation of Saudi custom. One of his sons said his mother has remarried, but refused to give details.

Divorce has become quite common in the kingdom, with press reports saying half of all marriages break up. But the fate of a divorced woman depends on her parents' frame of mind. If they oppose the divorce, they likely will confine her to the house and monitor her movements. She will be barred from dating or working without family permission.

Some parents, on the other hand, are modern-minded enough to let their daughters finish their schooling or go out to work. And although Islamic laws permit a man to have four wives at a time, most Muslim men today take one wife, because it has become the cultural norm and polyg-



Saleh al-Sayeri talks to a unidentified guest last month at the equestrian club in Usfan, Saudi Arabia. Al-Sayeri has married 58 women in 50 years. He currently has four wives, including a 14-year-old he married nine months ago.

amy is costly.

Al-Sayeri has had 10 sons, one of whom died. Two sons who were at the stable while their father was being interviewed rolled their eyes whenever the subject of marriages came up. They said they had come to accept that their dad is "mizwaj," a man who likes to marry often.

His son Fahd, a 32-year-old bachelor, is adamant he won't follow in his father's footsteps. "No, no, no," he said. "One will be enough for me."

Al-Sayeri said three of his four current wives have been with him 10 to 40 years. The fourth seems to be the one who usually gets replaced.

His latest marriage was to a 14-year-old girl nine months ago. She was the perfect age, he said.

Al-Sayeri said he will keep on marrying until the number of wives he has acquired equals the number of years he has lived.

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Car bomb north of Baghdad kills 19 Iraqis

10 others killed in separate attacks as militants target countrymen helping American forces

BY DUSAN STOJANOVIC

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — A suicide attacker detonated a car bomb north of Baghdad on Sunday, killing 19 Iraqis — all but one of them National Guardsmen — in another strike against Iraqis cooperating with American forces, the U.S. military said. Four Iraqi police were killed in a separate attack further north.

The car bomb blast near Balad, 50 miles north of Baghdad, also wounded six guardsmen, U.S. military spokesman Maj. Neal E. O'Brien said. The bomb detonated as their bus passed close to a U.S. base.

An Iraqi civilian — the bus driver — was among the 19 killed in the other casualties were members of Iraq's 203rd National Guard Battalion. The driver of the car that exploded also died.

Also Sunday, U.S. Task Force Baghdad soldiers were attacked in southwest of the capital when their patrol was struck by a car bomb, the military said. Two soldiers were wounded in the attack. The suicide bomber was killed.

"Those responsible for suicide attacks are seeking to halt Iraq's progress on the path to democracy," O'Brien said.

Meanwhile, the United States said it had significantly increased troop strength in Mosul to provide security ahead of the Jan. 30 elections for a constitutional assembly. The city has seen stepped-up insurgent attacks on both American and Iraqi forces in the weeks since U.S. troops captured the guerrilla stronghold of Fallujah in mid-November.

Two brigade-sized units, consisting of Iraqi forces and elements of the 82nd Airborne Divi-

sion, were deployed to augment the 8,000 troops already in Mosul, military spokesman Lt. Col. Paul Hastings said. Brigades can include 2,000-4,000 soldiers.

In the other attack, four policemen were killed while on patrol in Samarra, 60 miles north of Baghdad, the military said. A fifth was wounded. Both Samarra and Balad are in the so-called Sunni Triangle, the scene of frequent assaults on U.S. and Iraqi security forces.

In other violence Sunday, Col. Abdel Karim Riyadh, the police chief in Jebela, a town 40 miles south of Baghdad, was killed when gunmen stormed his house, police said.

Assaults also killed a police officer in a drive-by shooting in southern Baghdad late Saturday, police commissioner Najm Eid said. A Shiite cleric also was killed in the Baghdad neighborhood of Amal, he said.

Gunmen shot dead a deputy governor of the eastern Diyala province in his car, doctor Ahmed Fouad at the Baqubah General Hospital said Sunday.

The attacks came a day after al-Qaida's arm in Iraq issued a video showing militants executing five Iraqi security officers in the street, the latest move in their campaign to intimidate Iraqis and target those collaborating with U.S.-led forces.

A statement posted Saturday on an Islamist Web site along with the video denounced the officers as "American dogs" and threatened other Iraqis with the same fate if they joined security forces.

The U.S. military and the interim government of Prime Minister Ayad Allawi want the Iraqi police and National Guard to provide se-



In western Baghdad, a U.S. Army expert wearing a protective suit inspects a vehicle suspected of containing explosives on Sunday. No explosives were found in the car. Another car bomb north of Baghdad exploded on Sunday, killing 18 Iraqi National Guardsmen and their bus driver.

curity for the vote, but mass desertions from those forces could scuttle such plans.

The insurgents' video and statement were issued by al-Qaida in Iraq, the group led by Jordanian terrorist Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. The United States has offered a \$25 million reward for al-Zarqawi's capture — the same amount as for Osama bin Laden.

In a separate Web statement posted Saturday, al-Zarqawi's group also claimed responsibility for a number of attacks targeting security forces around Iraq earlier in the week.

In other developments Sunday, the U.S. military said Iraqi security forces "decisively defeated" insurgents attempting to seize a police station in the southern Mosul on Saturday — the fifth such attack in a week.

U.S. deaths in Iraq

The Associated Press

As of Saturday, at least 1,329 members of the U.S. military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count. At least 1,042 died as a result of hostile action, the Defense Department said. The figures include three military civilians.

The AP count is one higher than the Defense Department's tally, last updated at 10 a.m. Thursday.

The British military has reported 76 deaths; Italy, 19; Poland, 16; Spain, 11; Ukraine, nine; Bulgaria, seven; Slovakia,

three; Estonia, Thailand and the Netherlands, two each; and Denmark, El Salvador, Hungary and Latvia one death each.

Since May 1, 2003, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 1,191 U.S. military members have died, according to AP's count. That includes at least 933 deaths resulting from hostile action, according to the military's numbers.

The latest deaths reported by the military:

■ A soldier was killed Saturday in a roadside explosion north of Baghdad.

The latest identifications reported by the military:

■ No identifications reported.

U.S. soldier, former Afghan militia leader killed in firefight

BY STEPHEN GRAHAM

The Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — A U.S. soldier and a former Afghan militia leader were killed Sunday when American troops clashed with gunmen during a search operation in western Afghanistan, U.S. and Afghan officials said.

Meanwhile, an American aid worker escaped an apparent kidnap attempt by a group of gunmen in the capital, Kabul.

The troops came under attack from "an unknown number of enemy forces" while searching a compound near Shindand Airfield in Herat province early Sunday morning and returned fire, a U.S. military statement said.

"The Afghan citizen died at the scene," the statement said.

"The U.S. soldier was wounded in the attack and ... died a short time later at the airfield as a result of wounds received."

The soldier's name was withheld until his next of kin could be notified.

The military also didn't identify

the dead Afghan, or say if he was a suspected militant or a bystander.

But a local militia commander, Akhtar Mohammed Hussein, said the compound belonged to a former militia leader killed Mullah Dost.

There was fire from both sides. Mullah Dost was killed along with his wife, and two of their children were injured, Hussein said by telephone. "The Americans wanted to search his house, but we don't know who fired first."

Ziauddin Mahmoodi, the provincial police chief, said Dost was a veteran of the war against Soviet occupiers in the 1980s, and later aligned with the Taliban. He said Dost also served briefly as police chief in Shindand district last year.

The dead soldier was the first U.S. combat casualty this year and at least the 117th here since Enduring Freedom began in late 2001.

It was also the first since the start of Operation Lightning Freedom, the latest phase of the U.S.

military operation in Afghanistan, which began after Hamid Karzai's inauguration as the country's first directly elected president in early December.

U.S. and Afghan government forces have been stationed at Shindand Airfield, about 400 miles west of Kabul, since inter-

vening to halt bloody factional fighting in the region near the Iranian border in August.

Dozens of Afghan militiamen were killed in the battles, which resulted in the ouster of local strongman Ismail Khan as governor of Herat province, but there were no American victims.

Gunmen tried to abduct the American aid worker in Kabul on Sunday afternoon, but gave up when he resisted, the victim and Afghan police said.

A spokeswoman for the U.S. Embassy in Kabul said its officials were looking into the incident.

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With toys and tea, patrols near Taji foster good will

BY JOSEPH GIORDONO

Stars and Stripes

HORAL BOSH, Iraq — Sometimes, it's the soldiers who give out the gifts. Sometimes, it's the soldiers who get them.

As a regular part of their patrols in the areas around Taji, the National Guard soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Regiment have been handing out blankets and toys to children and families in an effort to "win the hearts and minds" of people who could help bring stability to the region.

And on days like Thursday, the soldiers are treated as welcome guests, invited to share a quick meal and some hot tea.

During a patrol near Hora al Bosh, a small farming village largely made up of crumbling stone and brick compounds, members of 1st Platoon, Company A kept an eye out for danger as they tried to attend to the community. At the beginning of the patrol, they walked through the village streets, handing out a half-dozen thick blankets to what appeared to be the families most in need.

"I remember this house. Let's give one to them," said 2nd Lt. Dan Hover, a 31-year-old from Medina, Ohio, gesturing to a group of young girls peering between the doors of a red metal gate.

As the soldiers moved through the streets, they gathered the customary crowd of children, who asked for such wide-ranging items as pens, water and money. The kids helped up younger siblings, chanting "baby! baby!" in hopes of enticing the soldiers to give them something.

Soldiers from the battalion said Hora al Bosh is a hard town to read. Some days, they are welcomed with smiles and waves and on other days people stare at the patrols from behind locked gates and fences.

After they had handed out all the blankets, the soldiers got back into their Humvees and patrolled the surrounding area, looking for weapons caches and possible spots for roadside bombs. As they stopped to search a set of fallow fields, two boys approached the soldiers and gave them freshly baked flatbread, still warm from the oven.

The boys then went back into the farmhouse, and returned with hot tea and sugar.

As the sun went down, the soldiers set up a traffic checkpoint, searching passing cars.

Before the patrol went out on its patrol, members were paid a



PHOTOS BY JOSEPH GIORDONO/Stars and Stripes

During a Friday patrol, an Iraqi boy gives freshly baked flatbread to Spc. Aciselo Melendez of Company A, 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry.

surprise visit by Maj. Gen. Peter W. Chiarelli, commander of the 1st Cavalry Division, which has responsibility for the areas in and around Baghdad.

Chiarelli spent part of Thursday visiting the 1st of the 69th, thanking soldiers, checking on their progress in the area and asking what support they needed.

As the squad's members lined up their Humvees to roll out, Chiarelli wanted their input. The

soldiers asked about more helmet clips for their night vision devices, side arms for Humvee gunners and more hand-mikes for their radios.

Chiarelli listened to the requests, promised to get answers for the soldiers and left them with a simple but direct message about getting complacent on their patrols: "Don't be predictable," he said.

E-mail Joseph Giordono at: giordonoj@pstripes.osd.mil



On a patrol that also included distributing blankets and gifts to local residents, members of Company A sweep a field where they suspect a weapons cache might be buried.

SEALs file suit over abuse photos

BY LEO SHANE III

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Six Navy SEALs filed suit Tuesday against The Associated Press for publishing photos they said revealed their identities and connected them to the prisoner abuse scandals in Iraq.

The men, some of whom are still serving in Iraq, are asking for unspecified damages from the news service. They alleged the photos invaded their privacy and put their lives at risk by showing their faces in a series of photographs published earlier this month.

The photos, which showed the soldiers with hooded and handcuffed prisoners, were obtained by Associated Press reporter Seth Hettner, who also wrote a story suggesting they might show evidence of prisoner abuse.

Stars and Stripes ran the story and one of the photos in its Dec. 6 editions.

U.S. military forces came under heavy scrutiny this summer after the discovery of pictures showing Army Reserve troops abusing Iraqi prisoners at Baghdad's Abu Ghraib prison.

Navy Special Warfare Command began investigating the six SEALs following the photos' release. Spokesman Lt. Taylor Clark said Wednesday that the investigation has been expanded to include the unit's commanders, but so far the Navy has not released any of its findings.

James Huston, attorney for the SEALs, said the photos in this case were taken for documentation purposes and do not show any violation of standard covert operations procedures.

"When this goes to trial, I think everyone will see that they did nothing wrong," Huston said. "But they've been tarred because this reporter said this could be the earliest evidence of prisoner abuse in Iraq."

Associated Press assistant general counsel Dave Tomlin dismissed the charges.

"We believe AP's use of the photos and the manner in which they were obtained were entirely lawful and proper," he said. "We intend to defend ourselves and our reporter vigorously and, we expect, successfully." In a statement, one of the SEALs called the reporter's actions "completely unnecessary."

"We are very disappointed in this reporter's unprofessional behavior and the fact that he showed such disregard for our, our safety, and the ongoing work we are doing," the unnamed plaintiff said.

"We find this conduct especially appalling in light of the continuing war in Iraq and the fact that we are continuing to put ourselves at risk."

Huston said since the photos were released they have been published widely in the Arab media, putting the SEALs' lives in danger. Several were posted by Cuban government officials on a billboard outside of Guantanamo Bay, comparing the U.S. military to Nazis.

The lawsuit, filed in California, also accuses the AP of illegally obtaining the photos from a private Web site and names two of the SEALs' wives as co-plaintiffs who suffered emotional trauma as a result of the incident.

E-mail Leo Shane at: shanel@pstripes.osd.mil

The road to recovery



JOE BATTLE/U.S. Army

U.S. Army Chief of Staff Gen. Peter Schoomaker pins a Purple Heart on Staff Sgt. Garth Johnson on Wednesday at the Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, Germany. Johnson was awarded the medal for injuries he sustained during the attack on the dining facility in Mosul, Iraq, on Dec. 21. During his visit, Schoomaker also presented two additional Purple Hearts and visited with patients and staff at Landstuhl.

U.S.: Syria border security is better

Armitage visit focuses on nation's alleged role in Iraqi insurgency

BY ZEINA KARAM
The Associated Press

DAMASCUS, Syria — The U.S. State Department's second-ranking official on Sunday said Syria had improved security along its border with Iraq but needs to do more to keep armed supporters of ousted Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein from sneaking across.

"Syria has made some real improvements in recent months on border security. But we all need to do more, particularly on the question of former regime elements participating in activities in Iraq, going back and forth from Syria," Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage told reporters in Damascus.

Armitage arrived in Syria Sunday for talks with officials here on Syria's alleged role in the Iraqi insurgency and the infiltration of

fighters across the Syrian border into Iraq. Syria has denied the charges.

After a short stop at the U.S. Embassy in Damascus, Armitage headed straight for talks with Syrian President Bashar Assad and his Foreign Minister Farouk al-Sharaa. He was accompanied by Assistant U.S. Secretary of State William Burns.

U.S.-Syria relations have been strained over U.S. accusations that Syria was meddling in Iraqi affairs, as well as Syria's involvement in neighboring Lebanon. A few months ago, Washington imposed sanctions on Syria under an act that accuses Damascus of seeking weapons of mass destruction, a charge Syria denies, and hosting Palestinian groups Washington deems terrorist.

In September, the U.S. Security Council passed a resolution in-

troduced by Washington and Paris calling on Syria to withdraw its troops from Lebanon and dismantle the Syrian-backed Lebanese Hezbollah guerrilla group.

More recently, President Bush has warned Syria and Iraq against "meddling" in the internal affairs of Iraq.

Washington and Baghdad have said that key support for the insurgency was coming from a half brother of Saddam Hussein and Baath Party leaders based in Syria.

Iraqi Prime Minister Ayad Alawi has said he had "adequate and accurate information" about Iraqis planning attacks from Syria and has sent a letter to Assad asking the Syrian authorities to hand over "wanted elements and those accused of planning and executing" attacks to Iraqi authorities.

Al-Sharaa denied the charges last week.

Measures to combat the insurgency are taking on increasing importance for both Iraq and the United States as the Jan. 30 national elections in Iraq rapidly approach. The insurgents are trying to disrupt the elections.

Armitage said he stressed to the Syrian leadership the "absolute importance" of the Iraqi elections and the need to have full Iraqi participation. "I believe I found here in Syria the same view," he said.

Armitage also said he called on Syria to withdraw from Lebanon and warned Syria against interfering in parliamentary elections due to be held in Lebanon in May.

Syria, with some 14,000 troops stationed in Lebanon, is the main power broker in that country.



Richard Armitage

There have been growing international and local calls in Lebanon for Syria to stop interfering in Lebanese affairs.

Syria's official news agency SANA said Assad discussed with the U.S. delegation "the situation in Iraq and the political process there, including the elections." It said the two sides also discussed the Mideast peace process.

Armitage, who will also travel to Jordan and Turkey, which also border Iraq, arrived here from northern Iraq, where he paid a surprise visit.

Army medics get intensive training before deployment

BY KIMBERLY HEFLING
The Associated Press

FORT CAMPBELL, Ky. — Fake blood spewed, smoke billowed, strobe lights flashed and two high-tech dummies with limbs blown off lay on the ground.

"Medic, somebody call a medic!" a woman shrieked as the sound of gunfire erupted from the shadows.

In rushed an out-of-breath Pfc. Merinda Karn with aid bag in hand for a test of her medic skills.

As the insurgents in Iraq step up their attacks, the Army has increased the intensity of its training of battlefield medics. That has meant moving the training from classrooms to more realistic settings and teaching medics to keep fighting the enemy — even if it means sometimes delaying treatment of the wounded.

"One medic on his weapon returning fire can make the difference between the enemy staying and continuing to fire on us, or saying 'Whoa, I got to go,'" said Capt. Brad Tibbetts, the officer in charge of the Alfred V. Rascoe School of Combat Medicine at Fort Campbell. "That's one thing we teach them — when to delay and when you can't."

This year, about 500 medics and others who work in small, isolated units will undergo training at the school. They attend the class partly to refresh skills they acquired during a 16-week course at Fort Sam Houston in Texas, where all new Army medics take civilian emergency medical technician classes and study battlefield techniques.

Most of the training at the Fort Campbell school is conducted using strikingly lifelike dummies controlled by computers. The dummies "bleed," breathe, blink and have a pulse.

Nearly 90 percent of Americans wounded in Iraq are surviving, compared with 73 percent in Vietnam and 78 percent in the 1991 Persian Gulf War. Col. Richard Agee, chief of staff of the U.S. Army Medical Department and School, credited better body armor and better training of medical personnel.

Master Sgt. Luis Rodriguez, the noncommissioned officer in charge of the training at the school, is a former medic who was hit by mortar fire in Iraq. He lost a leg, but the use of a tourniquet helped save his life. He said the first thing he tells the medics is that the enemy will fire at them even if they are rendering aid, and they must be prepared to fight.

Fort Campbell started holding the final test for the class in a dark room after 101st Airborne Division medics returning from Afghanistan said they were not prepared to treat the wounded without light.



A dummy designed to simulate an injured soldier is attended to during combat medic training Nov. 18 at the Alfred V. Rascoe School of Combat Medicine at Fort Campbell, Ky.

The 20-year-old Karn, who weighs about 140 pounds, was out of breath when she ran in to take the test because she had run six miles that morning and then dragged a 185-pound soldier about 200 yards before dashing into the room.

She flunked the test because in the dark she failed to find an exit wound in the back of her "casualty," and it "died."

Afterward, the lights came on in the room and taps played. An instructor discussed what she did wrong. "I just wasn't as thorough as I should've been," Karn said before leaving the room to write a letter to the "casualty's" parents, also part of the medic training.

Tibbetts said it is OK to make mistakes here.

Spy plane crashes near Afghan border

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan — An unmanned spy plane crashed near a Pakistani village along the Afghan border, an army spokesman said Sunday. No injuries were reported.

Maj. Gen. Shaukat Sultan would not say whether the drone, which crashed late Saturday in North Waziristan, belonged to the U.S. military, which has thousands of forces hunting al-Qaida and Taliban militants on the Afghan side of the rugged border.

Reservist's auction nets \$3,000 for gear

SAN FRANCISCO — An 18-year-old Army reservist whose decision to auction off sports memorabilia to buy equipment for his unit drew criticism has raised nearly \$3,000.

Sven Flynn's plans became public last month as the military was being criticized for not adequately supplying some troops in Iraq. The 10-day eBay auction ended last week and raised \$2,806, plus about \$1,000 in donations.

Half the total will go to support Mothers of Military Servicemen, while the remainder will buy a luxury item such as a laptop computer or satellite phone for the Mountain View-based 445th Civil Affairs Battalion.

From The Associated Press

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Budget cuts could hit Raptor production

BY RENAE MERLE
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon is considering cutting some of its largest programs, including the F/A-22 Raptor, to help bring down the budget deficit during the next few years and offset war costs, according to congressional and industry sources.

The proposals are considered tentative and have not been approved by the Office of Management and Budget or Congress, where they could face substantial resistance. The Pentagon is not scheduled to release its fiscal 2006 budget proposal until February.

The proposal also is expected to include significant cuts to the Navy's shipbuilding budget. "No service is getting away scot-free," said a Senate aide, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because the process is in its early stages.

The cuts would confirm Wall Street and industry concerns that the Pentagon's hefty budget eventually would have to be tempered to offset the cost of the war and the budget deficit. In an interview last week, James Albaugh, president of Boeing Co.'s defense unit, said budget pressure was the chief obstacle facing the industry next year.

"The big programs are all going to be looked at, just because of their size," Al-



LOCKHEED MARTIN/AP

The F/A-22 Raptor could be a casualty of Defense Department budget cuts, according to congressional and industry sources. However, the Pentagon will not release its budget plans until February.

baugh said. Defense Department spokesman Eric Ruff said nothing is final until the budget is submitted and that the 2006 budget is likely to include an overall increase. "Throughout this budget process we have focused on military capabilities: agility, speed, precision and flexibility," Ruff said.

Ruff declined to specify any programs, but acknowledged that changes to the tactical air programs were being discussed. "It's only fair that we look back at the programs that were begun two or three decades ago to meet Cold War challenges," Ruff said. "The services have been reviewing their priorities given today's world and

they are making decisions about where to make their investments."

The Navy's budget proposal already includes several program reductions, including building only four ships in fiscal 2006, compared with nine planned for the current fiscal year, and delaying production of a new generation of destroyers, defense and industry sources have said.

Under the current proposal, Lockheed Martin Corp.'s F/A-22 would remain fully funded through 2008 with the company building 24 to 26 of the planes a year, according to the sources. But funding for the program could stop or dwindle after 2008, the sources said. The cuts would mean Lockheed would produce 160 to 170 of the aircraft instead of the 277 the Air Force currently projects, the sources said. The future of the program could depend on the Quadrennial Defense Review the Pentagon is conducting to assess what it will need to fight the wars of the future.

"While we have not been notified of any changes to the F/A-22 program, if in fact these cuts do occur, they would not take place for several years and we believe the aircraft will prove its value and we would hope to see the next model of aircraft restored," said Dennis R. Boxer, a Lockheed spokesman.

Any cuts to the Raptor are expected to be resisted by supporters in Congress, who have fought off previous attempts to cut back or cancel the program.



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Report: AF Academy investigator knew of allegations early on

The Associated Press

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. — A top Air Force attorney was quickly notified 2½ years ago about a letter alleging that rapes were going unpunished at the Air Force Academy, but she later told investigators she learned of the letter more than a year later, according to a published report.

General Counsel Mary Walker, the Air Force's top civilian lawyer, was briefed via e-mail days after an anonymous June 28, 2002, letter alleged the academy was discounting rape reports and blaming female cadets for being attacked. (The Colorado Springs) Gazette reported Friday, citing newly obtained documents.

But Walker told Pentagon investigators she knew nothing of the letter until fall 2003 — months after the scandal went public, a new report says.

"I think this certainly raises a lot of concerns about how truthful she's been with members of Congress and members of the Fowler Commission," said Sen. Wayne Allard, the Colorado Republican who led efforts to uncover the scandal.

"I think it would be a good idea to put her under oath and get her to testify," Allard said.

Walker did not respond to a request for comment from the newspaper and an Air Force spokesman did not immediately return a message Friday.

A congressional panel led by former Rep. Tillie Fowler was critical of a report by a group led by Walker. Fowler said the group tried to "shield Air Force head-

quarters from public criticism" by downplaying leadership failures.

In contrast, the Defense Department's inspector general recently exonerated Walker and 20 others. Allard is seeking hearings on the differences before the Senate Armed Services Committee.

The anonymous June 2002 letter emerged along with other documents that the inspector general's report.

The letter, addressed to then-Air Force Secretary James Roche, Chief of Staff John Jumper and others, said female cadets "are being raped and sexually harassed by male cadets and academy officials refuse to prosecute the male rapists."

The newspaper said that it obtained records showing Walker's deputy, William Atlee, told her of the letter on July 3, 2002, e-mail. "Sounds horrible. Keep me advised," Walker responded.

The two exchanged five e-mails that day labeled "new academy allegations," and over the next two months they traded numerous messages titled "academy report," "academy letter" and "recent events at USAFA."

The messages were censored by Air Force officials before being released, the newspaper said.

The Pentagon report cites Walker's Jan. 22 testimony to investigators in which she said she "didn't know anything" about the letter until a Sept. 30, 2003, hearing.

Walker's investigation concluded there was "no systemic acceptance of sexual assault (or) institutional avoidance of responsibility."

IN THE STATES

Iraq, Iran, U.S. 'area at top of Bush's agenda'

BY ANNE GEARAN
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The three countries President Bush called an "axis of evil" in his first term are at the top of his foreign policy to-do list in the second, along with a revitalized Mideast peace process and continued efforts to repair European alliances frayed by the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq.

War and reconstruction in Iraq are likely to continue to command more attention than any other international issues, at least for the first couple of years of Bush's new four-year term.

"The first priority has got to be getting

Iraq right," said Max Boot, a conservative expert on national security at the Council on Foreign Relations.

But in the short run, the Bush administration also must juggle a complicated response to the devastation from the tsunami across South Asia amid some complaints that the rich United States is not doing enough.

The massive relief effort — for which the United States increased its financial aid commitment Friday to \$550 million — is drawing attention away from preparations for elections scheduled for Jan. 30 in Iraq, but the distraction will probably be brief.

On Iraq, the administration will get a real and perceived boost in credibility if elections scheduled there for the end of this month come off well. Boot and others said. Another round of elections is planned for later in 2005.

The alternative — protracted turmoil and violence that the United States cannot

control — would complicate U.S. foreign policy far beyond Iraq.

Bush seemed to acknowledge that Iraq remains Job No. 1 during a year-end news conference.

"We have a vital interest in the success of a free Iraq. You see, free societies do not export terror," Bush said.

Iran and North Korea, the other two countries in Bush's famous axis, loom nearly as large as Iraq. The United States suspects both countries are on their way to possessing nuclear weapons, or already have them. Both have repressive or authoritarian governments that could interfere with their neighbors or worse.

U.S. policy in all three nations is yoked to the continuing war on terrorism, since all three are potential training grounds or arsenals for terrorists.

Bush must decide how much to push Iran and North Korea diplomatically; how much to cooperate with European efforts to contain the nuclear threats; and how

much to listen to hawks in his own government who may press for a limited airstrike against Iranian nuclear facilities.

At the same time, Bush may play a central role in the next phase of peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. For now, Britain is taking that lead while all sides await the outcome of Jan. 9 elections to choose a successor to Yasser Arafat.

China will probably also be a major focus of U.S. economic and diplomatic efforts during the next four years, and not just because of its vast size and resources. China could help contain or confront North Korea, said Patrick Cronin, a foreign policy analyst at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Bush will also have a wary eye on Russia, the Cold War nemesis turned ally in the war on terror. The administration chose mostly to hold its tongue as Russian President Vladimir Putin consolidated political and economic power while maintaining independent media organizations, but may now adopt a harder line.

Bush

U.S. plans for indefinite jailing of terror suspects

BY DANA PRIEST
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — Administration officials are preparing long-range plans for indefinitely imprisoning suspected terrorists who they do not want to set free or turn over to courts in the United States or other countries, according to intelligence, defense and diplomatic officials.

The Pentagon and the CIA have asked the White House to decide on a more permanent approach for potentially lifetime detentions, including for hundreds of people now in military and CIA custody whom the government does not have enough evidence to charge in court. The outcome of the review, which also involves the State Department, would also affect those expected to be captured in the course of future counterterrorism operations.

"We've been operating in the moment because that's what has been required," said a senior administration official involved in the discussions, who said the current detention system has strained relations between the United States and other countries. "Now we can take a breath. We have the ability and need to look at long-term solutions."

One proposal under review is

the transfer of large numbers of Afghan, Saudi and Yemeni detainees from the military's Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, detention center into new U.S.-built prisons in their home countries. The prisons would be operated by contractors but the State Department, where this idea originated, would ask them to abide by recognized human rights standards and would monitor compliance, the senior administration official said.

As part of a solution, the Defense Department, which holds 500 prisoners at Guantanamo Bay, plans to ask Congress for \$25 million to build a 200-bed prison to hold detainees who are unlikely to ever go through a military tribunal for lack of evidence, according to defense officials.

The new prison, dubbed Camp 6, would allow inmates more comfort and freedom than they have now, and would be designed for prisoners who the government believes have no more intelligence to share, the officials said. It would be modeled on a U.S. prison and would allow socializing among inmates.

"Since global war on terror is a long-term effort it makes sense for us to be looking at solutions for long-term problems," said Bryan Whitman, a Pentagon spokesman.

Powell not interested in running for political office

WASHINGTON — As he prepares to end his tenure as secretary of state, Colin Powell is ruling out a run for political office.

Asked on the Sunday talk shows if he had any plans to seek elective office, Powell responded with a firm and quick, "No."

He said he has no immediate plans to write a book, either.

Powell said he really hasn't nailed down exactly what he's going to do.

"I'm still looking at the opportunities that are out there after I retire. I'm sure there will be opportunities to serve in a public way," Powell told NBC's "Meet the Press."

I don't intend to regenerate for the rest of my life. And so we'll see what happens. I hope to continue to serve the country in some way in private life," he added.

Powell also appeared on CBS and CNN.

From The Associated Press

Longtime Calif. congressman dies

The Associated Press

BETHESDA, Md. — Democratic Rep. Robert T. Matsui of California, who spent time in an internment camp for Japanese-Americans as an infant during World War II and went on to serve 26 years in Congress representing the Sacramento area, has died of complications from a rare disease, his family said Sunday.

Matsui, 63, died Saturday night at the National Naval Medical Center just outside Washington, D.C.

Matsui juggled political and policy roles during more than a quarter-century in Congress. He was the chairman of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee for the past two years, in

charge of the unsuccessful effort to regain control of the House.

He also was the third-ranking Democrat on the powerful House Ways and Means Committee, where he was his party's point man on Social Security legislation.

In a statement announcing Matsui's death, his office disclosed that the congressman was diagnosed several months ago with Mito Dysplastic Disorder, a rare genetic disorder that reduces the body's ability to produce red blood cells, white blood cells and platelets. Victims of the disease are left more susceptible to other illnesses, with less ability to fight them off. The statement said Matsui entered the hospital on Dec. 24 with pneumonia.

Matsui was recently re-elected with ease to his 14th term in Congress. His death will trigger a special election for a new representative in his Sacramento-area district.

Matsui was born in 1941. The following year, his family was among the Japanese-Americans forced into internment camps during World War II. Decades later, he helped pass legislation that apologized for the internment policy and provided compensation for the survivors.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Japanese yen (Jan. 3)	101.00
South Korean won (Jan. 3)	1,009.00
Euro costs (Jan. 3)	\$1.962
Dollar buys (Jan. 3)	¢71.62
British pound (Jan. 3)	\$1.97

Commercial rates	
Bahrain (dinar)	¢3.78
British pound	\$1.9172
Canada (dollar)	70.15
Denmark (krone)	¢4.653
Egypt (pound)	¢1.755
France (franc)	\$1.3546/¢2.16
Hong Kong (dollar)	71.727
Hungary (forint)	180.15
Indonesia (rupiah)	¢15.71
Israel (sheqel)	¢1.836
Japan (yen)	102.79
Malaysia (ringgit)	¢1.67
Norway (krone)	¢6.0352
Philippines (peso)	¢46.77
Saudi Arabia (riyal)	¢3.7594
Singapore (dollar)	70.621
South Korea (won)	1,005.10
Taiwan (dollar)	180.15
Thailand (baht)	¢5.32
U.S. dollar	131.35/¢38.00

(Military exchange rates are those authorized by the Defense Department for use in facilities in the country of issuance. Commercial rates are those authorized by the U.S. Treasury, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For local currency exchange rates, U.S. purchasing and sales agents in foreign countries should contact their local exchange facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates for the local currency. U.S. buying currency. All figures are foreign dollar equivalents. U.S. dollar is in dollars to euro, and the euro, which is dollars to euro.

PRECIOUS METALS

New York Merc exchange	
Gold	\$437.50
Silver	\$6.97

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	5.25
Discount rate	5.25
3-month bill	2.3125
6-month bill	2.3125
9-month bill	2.3125
1-year bill	2.3125
10-year Treasury note	2.3125
30-year Treasury bond	2.3125
Source: The Associated Press, Bank of America	

Cents and Sensibility
Money tip of the day

Free-cycle unwanted items

CBS MarketWatch

NEW YORK — One person's trash is another person's treasure.

A lucky find is even better if you don't have to pay anything for that treasure. But getting quality stuff for free doesn't mean you have to linger outside after flea markets, major holidays or moving sales.

A movement called "free-cycling" — posting items you'd like to give away on Internet message boards — is gaining momentum across the nation. The idea is to reduce the amount of useable items ending up in landfills.

There are almost 2,000 cities with such give-away groups and more than 700,000 people on free-cyclers, reports Freecycle.org, a resource for users.

Be sure to check the rules before you write a post offering up that end table in your garage, the litter of kittens your cat just had or your dateless best friend for a night on the town. Free-cycling has a few strict rules: You cannot sell or trade anything, you can't list anything illegal or age-inappropriate (such as alcohol where minors might access the posting), and you can't list personal ads or otherwise try to free-cycle people.

Each group makes its own guidelines about what can be posted.

Generally you can post items you'd like to give away or items you're looking for. Groups may or may not allow postings to find homes for pets.

To search for a group near you, visit www.freecycle.org.

NASA fired up about real-life Deep Impact

By MARCIA DUNN

The Associated Press

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — The big, grown-up boys on the NASA team can hardly wait. Next Fourth of July, they get to bust up a comet, Hollywood-style.

"Blow things up? I'm there. Yeah, I don't have any issue with that," says Richard Grammer, manager of the project for Jet Propulsion Laboratory. (And, oh yeah, he used to work with explosives in the military.)

The spacecraft is called Deep Impact, just like the 1998 movie about a comet headed straight for Earth. NASA's goal is to blast a crater into Comet Tempel 1 and analyze the ice, dust and other primordial stuff hurled out of the pit.

Mission planners say the energy produced will be like 4.5 tons of TNT going off — producing a fireworks display for the world's observatories.

Scientists know little about comets and even less about their nuclei, or cores. Those involved with the project believe that penetrating the interior for observations by space and ground telescopes is the best thing to actually landing, scooping up samples and delivering them to Earth.

"A sample return would be the ultimate, but this is one exciting mission because for the first time we're actually reaching out and we're going to create our own crater," says Donald Yeomans, a senior research

scientist at JPL in California — and an adviser on the movie.

"We'll understand how the comet is put together, its density, its porosity, whether it has a surface crust and underlying ices, whether it's layered ice, whether it's a wumpy comet or whether it's a rock-hard ice ball. All of these things will become apparent after we smack it."

Astronomers are counting on Deep Impact to live up to its Hollywood name on July 4, six months after its mid-January launch.

This is one spacecraft NASA wants to smash and trash.

"It would be like it's standing in the middle of the road and this huge semi coming down at it at 23,000 mph, you know, just bam!" Grammer says.

If all goes well, Deep Impact will be the first spacecraft to reach the surface of a comet. NASA's Stardust spacecraft — on its way back to Earth with dust from Comet Wild 2 — flew through the coma, or dusty gas cloud.

Deep Impact will have traveled 268 million miles from the time it is launched aboard an unmanned rocket until it intersects with Comet Tempel 1 just beyond the orbit of Mars, at a point more than 80 million miles from Earth.

Liftoff is targeted for Jan. 12, two weeks late because of software and rocket problems. NASA has until Jan. 28 to launch Deep Impact. After that, Tempel 1 will be beyond rocket reach and scientists will have to pick another comet and swallow a lengthy delay.



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Rose Parade celebrates American families

BY PAUL CHAVEZ
The Associated Press

HPASADENA, Calif. — Thousands of revelers welcomed the new year Saturday by lining the streets to watch the 116th Rose Parade, featuring a 45-foot-tall replica of Disneyland's Sleeping Beauty Castle and a train more than 200 feet long — the longest float in parade history.

The Rose Parade featured 50 flower-covered floats reflecting the theme "Celebrate Family" with a fanciful mix of characters, including a 50-foot robot, a drag-on teaching its child to fly and a family of frogs on a bicycle trying to escape a menacing French chef.

Mickey Mouse was the grand marshal of the parade, which was followed by a down-to-the wire Rose Bowl that ended with a 38-37 victory for Texas over Michigan.

A 207-foot, firework-spouting train float, called "Families Across America," drew loud cheers and won the award for exceptional showmanship and dra-

matic impact for a float more than 55 feet long.

"It was just a massive float," said Jean Dormann, of Walnut Creek, Calif., who watched the parade.

Among the most spectacular floats was the robot that fired jets of carbon dioxide — the parade's first entry ever by NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory and the California Institute of Technology.

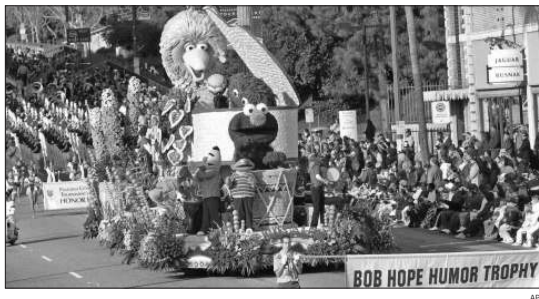
The parade's award for most beautiful floral presentation and design went to "Playful Pandamonium," which depicted a family of panda bears frolicking in a misty forest and stream.

The New Year's extravaganza was led by the Disneyland float, a 45-foot-tall replica of Sleeping Beauty Castle commemorating the upcoming 50th anniversary of the theme park.

The float was covered with white, yellow and lavender mums, plus "an ample touch of genuine Disney pixie dust," according to the parade program.

"It was very fun and beautiful," said Tyler Bratton, a 10-year-old who snapped photos of his first Rose Parade.

The parade began with a roar-



The International Music Products Association's float titled "Music Makes Us a Family," winner of the Bob Hope Humor Trophy, makes its way down Colorado Blvd., during the 116th Annual Rose Parade on Saturday in Pasadena, Calif.

ing flyover by an Air Force B-2 stealth bomber that brought spectators to their feet.

It was followed by a float sponsored by the city of Alhambra,

Calif., depicting a floral eagle and two American flags.

Many of the parade-watchers had staked out front-row seats on Friday and spent the night huddled around curbside barbecues or wrapped in blankets.

Overnight temperatures dipped into the low 40s, but Saturday's skies were clear and sunny.

At least it's for charity



Participants enter the water during the 17th Annual Lobster Dip race into the Atlantic Ocean at Old Orchard Beach, Maine, on Saturday. Close to 500 people braved the 42-degree water while helping to raise funds for the Maine Special Olympics.

Overused English words take hit in the annual word-ban campaign

BY DAVID N. GOODMAN
The Associated Press

DETROIT — From wardrobe malfunctions to erectile dysfunction, it's been a tough year all around for the guardians of English — language purists from blue, red and battleground states who long to say "You're fired!" to offensive words and phrases.

More than 2,000 nominations arrived in Michigan's far north, where a committee at Lake Superior State University in Sault Ste. Marie released its 2005 compilation of language irritants Friday.

Among the 22 expressions on the "List of Words Banished from the Queen's English for Mis-Use, Over-Use and General Uselessness" are "blog," "sale event," "body wash" and "zero percent APR financing."

"We're uber-serious about this list," said committee organizer Tom Pink, referring to the German prefix meaning "over" or "super" that increasingly finds its way into English.

Group members act as "linguistic sounding boards," said John

And the nominees are...

The Associated Press

Lake Superior State University's 2005 list of banished words, and comments from contributors:

- Blue states/red states
- Flip flop/flip-flop/flip flopping
- Battleground state
- And I approve this message
- Pockets of resistance
- Improvised explosive device, or what once was known as a bomb
- Enemy combatant
- Carbs
- You're fired!
- Use
- 'tizie' speak, as in such expressions as fa'shizzle, meaning for sure

- Wardrobe malfunction
- Blog and its variations, including blogger, blogged, blogging, blogosphere
- Webinar, for seminar on the Web
- Zero percent APR financing
- Safe and effective
- Erectile dysfunction
- Journey, in reaction to reality show contestant comments about "how amazing the journey was"
- Body wash, once known as soap
- Sale event
- All new, as in television episodes
- And more, as in "it's a hamburger meal, but it's much, much more."

Source: Lake Superior State University

Shibley, co-compiler of the list.

Now in its 30th year, the banned word list has drawn imitators and critics. Among the latter are members of the American Dialect Society, who choose their "Words of the Year" at a Jan. 7 annual meeting in Oakland, Calif. Made up of academic linguists, the group is less judgmental and more descrip-

tive in its approach.

Many words appear on both lists.

Shibley said the Lake Superior State group compiles the list in the spirit of fun, and going through old lists can be "like coming across a lost script from an Austin Powers movie."

Ohio Supreme Court bans tobacco ads on free matchbooks

The Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Matchbooks given out at bars and stores cannot bear advertising for cigarettes or other tobacco products under the 1998 settlement involving 46 states and the major tobacco companies, the Ohio Supreme Court ruled.

The promotional matchbooks fit the definition of merchandise and are governed

by the ban on youth-oriented tobacco marketing in the settlement, which included Ohio, according to Thursday's unanimous ruling.

Ohio sued R.J. Reynolds over matchbooks advertising the company's cigarette brands, saying they were marketing merchandise prohibited in the settlement.

Reynolds, a subsidiary of Reynolds American Inc., contended the matchbooks

were not banned by the detailed agreement, which ended class-action lawsuits brought by the states.

Reynolds won in Franklin County Common Pleas Court, which held that free matchbooks were not merchandise. But the 10th Ohio District Court of Appeals in Columbus reversed that ruling, and the Supreme Court agreed.

The ruling quoted the matchbook manu-

facturer's promotional materials saying that "for every person who picks up a matchbook, there are eight other people who typically see it."

The states that signed the settlement agreement with the companies are supposed to get the \$206 billion over 25 years, including \$10 billion for Ohio. In addition, the tobacco companies promised not to market to children and teens.

Heating oil prices create firewood demand

BY CLARKE CANFIELD
The Associated Press

PORTLAND, Maine — Firewood sales — and prices — are rising in New England and parts of the West this winter, fueled by increasingly expensive oil and kerosene.

The strong demand has pushed prices to their highest levels ever, said Peter Lammert, a forester with the Maine Forest Service.

Seasoned firewood is now selling for roughly \$180 to \$230 a cord compared to between \$140 and \$160 a year ago in Maine, he said.

Similar prices are being reported in New Hampshire and Vermont.

Ray Colton of Pittsfield, Vt., said his company has sold more than 4,000 cords this season, about 1,000 more than last year: "We're selling as fast as we produce," he said.

A cord is a stack of firewood 4 feet wide, 8 feet long and 4 feet high.

Oil prices are hovering at close to \$2 a gallon in Maine, up more than 30 percent from a year ago. At \$2.18 a gallon, kerosene is 56

cents more than last year. And propane averages \$2.06 a gallon, up 43 cents from a year ago.

Prices are also up over West, including in Colorado, where local hardwood begins at \$180 per cord and imported oak costs \$300.

Even with firewood prices heating up, Paul Reed Jr., owner of Reed's Firewood in Durham, said consumers can still save hundreds of dollars in the winter by burning wood.

"Firewood at \$180 a cord is still a deal compared to what it costs to heat your home with oil," he said.



Paul Reed Sr. moves firewood at Reed's Firewood in Durham, Maine. With heating oil prices hovering around \$2 a gallon, firewood demand is up across Maine and northern New England this season.

Nobel winner Axelrod dies at 92; studied nerve cell communication

The Associated Press

ROCKVILLE, Md. — Julius Axelrod, a National Institutes of Health neuroscientist who won the Nobel Prize for his work on how nerve cells communicate and affect behavior, has died. He was 92.

He died Dec. 29 at his home in Rockville.

Axelrod shared the 1970 Nobel in physiology or medicine with two other scientists, Bernard Katz of Britain and Ulf von Euler of Sweden. Their work on chemi-

cals released by nerve endings formed the foundation for a host of new antidepressants in the class of Prozac and Zoloft.

Earlier in his career, Axelrod helped identify acetylcholine, used in the pain reliever Tylenol.



Axelrod

"His contributions to pharmacology, especially in terms of how drugs act in the brain, were extraordinary," Dr. Solomon Snyder, director of the neuroscience department at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, told The New York Times.

The son of Jewish immigrants from Poland, Axelrod was born May 30, 1912, in New York. He graduated from City College of New York in 1933 and hoped to become a doctor but was rejected by several medical schools because of strict quotas on Jews.

He earned a master's degree in chemistry from New York University in 1941 and a doctorate in pharmacology from George Washington University in 1955.

Axelrod worked with drug researcher Bernard Brodie at Goldwater Memorial Hospital in New York in the 1940s, studying pain medicines. The two found that acetylcholine was the active ingredient in a then-common headache treatment.

In 1955, Axelrod joined the NIH as head of the pharmacology division, where he worked on neu-

rotransmitters, chemicals passed between nerve cells in the brain. At the time, scientists believed that neurotransmitters were broken down after being released by nerve cells.

But Axelrod discovered some were pumped back into the cells that produced them.

Blocking the return of those neurotransmitters became the basis for a generation of antidepressant drugs.

Axelrod retired from NIH in 1984 but continued to work on projects at the research center.

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Murphy's mansion on the market

Actor-comedian **Eddie Murphy's** seven-bedroom mansion that includes a bowling alley, theater and recording studio is on the market for \$30 million.



Murphy

Murphy, 43, who has owned the gated estate in Englewood, N.J., known as "Bubble Hill" for 18 years, put it on the market this month. The Record of Bergen County reported.

The star of "Trading Places," "Beverly Hills Cop" and "The Nutty Professor" bought the 25,000-square-foot home in 1986, four years after it was built.

"It's an absolutely magnificent, stupendous house," **Mary Lenk** of Burghdorf, Realtors ERA told the newspaper.

The mansion also carries a hefty annual property tax bill, totaling nearly \$200,000 this year, tax records showed.

Alda relishes villain role

Alan Alda, who plays a scheming senator in Martin Scorsese's new film, "The Aviator," says there's something appealing about being the villain.

"I don't just want power, I want absolute power. That's rich," he told AP Radio of his role in the **Howard Hughes** biopic.

"The other thing is as a person, it's fun to be able to go in and spend the whole day just being ruthless," he said. "I mean, we'd all like to be ruthless once in awhile."

Alda — perhaps best known for his Emmy-winning role as "Hawkeye" Pierce on the '70s comedy-drama "M.A.S.H." — also plays a senator on NBC's "The West Wing."

But the roles couldn't be more different.

"The guy in 'The Aviator' is a total scuzzball," the 68-year-old actor said. "And the guy on 'West Wing,' he has principles, he's an idealist, he wants to do good for the country, and he's running for president."



Alda

Tough to get cash off poker champ

Greg Raymer, the 2004 World Series of Poker champion, apparently knows how to wield more than a stack of chips when everything is riding on it.

The soft-spoken, patient attorney from Stonington, Conn., fought off a pair of attackers Dec. 20 at the Bellagio hotel-casino after he had finished playing a cash game of poker, according to a Las Vegas police report.

Raymer was returning to his room about 2 a.m. when two men approached, the report said. As he opened the door to the room, they tried to push him in.

But Raymer resisted and began struggling with the men, the report said. As he was fighting, one of the men pulled out a gun and said, "We just want the money."

But Raymer didn't give up, and yelled for security, causing the men to flee.

A security officer said one of the suspects was a poker player and also recognized him from a previous incident.

"Police made an arrest in the case but the report didn't identify the person."

Bosnia honors Sontag

Sarajevo authorities will name a street after **Susan Sontag**, who helped the city's residents during the 1992-95 Bosnian war.

Sontag, 71, died Tuesday in New York from complications of leukemia.

"The city of Sarajevo [and] its citizens express their sincere thanks to an author and a humanist who actively participated in the creation of the history of Sarajevo and Bosnia," said a statement Thursday from the office of Mayor **Muhidin Hamdzic**.

A plaque in Sontag's honor will be installed on one of the city's theaters, the statement also said.

Sontag made numerous visits to the war and lobbied for the end of the siege of the Bosnian capital. In 1993, Sontag and a group of actors and directors staged a production of "Waiting for Godot" at the Youth Theater.



Sontag

Stories and photos from The Associated Press

Bardem sees inside

Javier Bardem sees weeks researching the lives of quadriplegics in preparation for his starring role in "The Sea Inside."

The Washington Post

Acclaimed Spanish actor explores the debate behind the right to die in 'The Sea Inside'

BY ELAINE DUTKA

Los Angeles Times

HOLLYWOOD — Four years ago, after **Javier Bardem** walked off with a host of best-actor awards and became the first Spaniard to be nominated for an Oscar in that category, Hollywood came calling. His unforgettable turn as a gay Cuban writer coping with political suppression and AIDS in Julian Schnabel's "Before Night Falls" propelled the sleepy-eyed sex symbol from "zero to 100 miles per hour," as he puts it — virtually overnight.

While many of his countrymen had gone the Latin-lover route or played ethnic sidekicks in cop movies, Bardem sidestepped the celebrity trap. Tempting as it was to work with director Steven Spielberg, he turned down the role eventually played by **Colin Farrell** in "Minority Report" for fear that his English would slow the banter.

Instead, he put on 30 pounds in 2002 to portray a struggling dockworker in the acclaimed "Mondays in the Sun," Spain's foreign-language Oscar entry. The same year, he played a detective trying to keep his soul clean in **John Malkovich's** directorial debut, "The Dancer Upstairs."

Born in the Canary Islands and a resident of Madrid, Spain, the actor is a superstar in his homeland, signing on to projects roughly every two years. Most recently, he accepted a cameo as a drug dealer in "Collateral" so he could work with director **Michael Mann** for a day.

Bardem's heroes are not the outsized characters endemic to celluloid, but everyday folk trying to stay afloat in the face of trying circumstances. In **Fine Line Features'** "The Sea Inside," the impediments are so severe that the protagonist is fighting to die. With \$25 million in ticket sales, the movie is the highest-grossing Spanish film of the year and the country's entry in the best foreign language film race.

Four million people have seen "The Sea Inside" in Spain alone, reviving the nation's euthanasia debate. On the Hollywood front, there's Oscar buzz surrounding the picture and Bardem's performance.

Based on the true story of poet **Ramón Sampedro**, the \$13 million film deals with a quadriplegic who spent 30 years in bed after a diving accident. He's drawn to an attractive attorney (**Belen Rueda**) who supports his cause and to a divorced neighbor (**Lola Duenas**) who's trying to convince him that life is worth living. Despite the infusion of love, however, the charismatic Sampedro stands firm. In a case that captured the imagination of the public, he failed

to get legal approval for assisted suicide. In 1998, a friend reported finding him dead in bed and an autopsy revealed traces of cyanide.

Premiering at the Venice International Film Festival in September, the film took the jury grand prize and Bardem was voted best actor. In his mind, it's a movie about a man's determination to regain the freedom denied him by institutions.

"The movie is about medicine, religion and government — who owns your life?" the 35-year-old actor says. "The three of them want to serve the cake of your destiny. I support Sampedro's desire to pass away — and I admire those who want to keep living. Life doesn't have the same meaning for everybody — it's not either/or, good/evil as our leaders want us to believe."

"Is it 'mercy' to make someone suffer because I decide he should live?"

Alluding to Sampedro's book "Letters From Hell," he adds: "The man philosophized about life and death, sex, family, law, church — on the level of Dostoevsky. We're not talking about a teenager who feels misunderstood."

The youngest member of a Spanish acting dynasty, Bardem was director **Alejandro Amenabar's** first choice to play the 55-year-old invalid.

"When he delivers, Javier has amazing magnetism," says 32-year-old **Amenabar**, who also co-wrote, co-produced,

scored and edited the film. "Like Sampedro, he manages to be seductive, using only his eyes and his voice. He's both instinctive and prepared, mad and disciplined, which was needed for the role. Every day for three months, Javier had five hours of makeup before lying motionless in bed for 10 hours. Even between takes, he couldn't move much because it would disrupt continuity."

Bardem had portrayed a paralyzed policeman in **Pedro Almodovar's** "Live Flesh" (1997), but Sampedro's plight was different. In summer 2003, detail-obsessed Bardem spent weeks speaking with doctors and quadriplegics in a Spanish hospital.

He learned about labored breathing and the need to speak in short, direct sentences. Externals also informed the characterization. After his head and eyebrows were shaved, makeup designer **Jo Allen** ("The Hours") applied layers of burning liquid to age his skin. It was then that he began to understand, "from experience rather than theory," a smidgen of what Sampedro endured. And when he looked at his older self with glasses, he recalls with a smile, he saw his late father's face.

A painful fight

TX DALLAS — A 21-year-old man bit off a co-worker's ear after an argument over money, police said.

Doctors were able to re-attach Anthony Tran's ear, police said.

Co-worker Ray Leon Jefferson was in Dallas County jail on \$25,000 bail facing an aggravated robbery charge.

The dispute began at a plant of Strategic Partners, a distributor of medical uniforms. According to police, Jefferson asked Tran, 21, for change for a \$100 bill. Tran pulled a \$20 bill and a \$50 bill from his wallet. Jefferson took both bills, the police report said.

After telling Jefferson to return the money, police said, Tran held a pen to Jefferson's stomach. A scuffle ensued, and Tran's ear was bitten off, the police report said.

Snowboarding death

CO BRECKENRIDGE — A 42-year-old snowboarder hit a tree at the Breckenridge ski area and died, the third accidental death this season at a Colorado resort.

The snowboarder, Curt Hubbell of Castle Rock, was wearing a protective helmet and apparently died of internal injuries, according to the coroner. An autopsy was scheduled for this week.

Now that's old school

OH CANTON — High school students taking teacher Marc Biss's multimedia class know their iPods, MP3 players, DVDs and HDTV. Of that, there is no doubt.

But when it comes to microfilm, mnemonographs and fuzz buttons, you might as well be speaking in FORTRAN.

Not a single one of Biss's 37 multimedia and Web design students at GlenOak High School knew what microfilm or a mnemonograph were. The majority thought a fuzz button was a vacuum sweeper.

Beta, 8-track tapes and 45 rpm are also lost on them. Junior Sam Bendekegy asked if Beta is a medicine.

Most of the students seemed vaguely familiar with rotary phones because some grandparents still use them.

Fifteen-year-old Neil Harvey thought 45 rpm referred to "how fast a modem runs."

After getting an explanation, Harvey understood.

"You mean those giant black discs? My parents have some in the basement," he said.

Rare whale watching

NC WRIGHTSVILLE BEACH — No need to blubber — those endangered whales weren't beached or tangled, just feeling friendly.

An endangered right whale and her calf swam close to shore here, exciting onlookers and sending officials into the Atlantic to make sure they were safe.

Coast Guard Petty Officer Timothy Johnson said his station was alerted by a woman who spotted the whales with binoculars from her hotel room.

Johnson said a boat was sent out to get a closer look. He viewed the whales at close range and estimated



AMERICAN ROUNDUP

ed the mother to be about 50 feet long, with the calf about half her size.

There only about 300 of the critically endangered right whales in the world's oceans. The Coast Guard enforces a strict 500-yard safety zone around them.

Expensive new crib

NY WAINSCOTT — New York's most expensive home is no longer a posh Manhattan high rise — that title now moves to the state's other tract of astronomically priced real estate.

An 18,000-square-foot Hampton retreat has been sold for \$45 million, situated on 25 acres of waterfront property on eastern Long Island. Known as Burnt Point, it has 14 bathrooms and is equipped with geothermal air conditioning.

The buyer was Stewart Rahr, CEO of Kinsey Inc., a pharmaceutical distributor. Neighbors include Steven Spielberg, Calvin Klein and Ronald Perleman.

Putting travel on ice

ND GRAND FORKS — Leave it to Canadians to cheer for ice and snow.

Blowing snow and icy roads stranded hundreds of fans here for the World Junior Hockey Championship.

While Canada was breezing to an 8-1 win over Finland, authorities announced the closure of Canadian Highway 75, which turns into Interstate 29 in North Dakota.



Just like home

Kaluk, a male polar bear at the San Diego Zoo, tosses a toy snowman. The zoo created a winter scene for the bears by blowing 24 tons of snow into their exhibit.

ta. Canadians cheered the announcement, nearly as much as their team's victory.

Manitoba Premier Gary Doer was among the nearly 9,600 — mostly Canadians — watching the game. He said he was working to get snowplows back home to clear the roads.

For those stranded, the American Red Cross set up a shelter in the city-owned Alurus Center.

Lawmakers seem bored

CA LOS ANGELES — During public hearings, members of the City Council talk on cell phones, chat among themselves, read mail or wander around the room.

A state appeals court says they should be doing something else: paying attention.

Ruling on a suit brought by the owners of a strip club, the 2nd District Court of Appeal said as a 15-member council acts as a quasi-judicial body when it holds hearings and has a legal duty to listen to testimony — or risk violating citizens' due process.

In a hearing involving a strip club owner who was seeking to extend his hours, both sides "had the right to be equally heard, not equally ignored," the court wrote in a decision, ordering a new hearing.

The city has not said whether it will appeal.

At the hearing — which also was Hawaiian Shirt Day for the council — one council member paced, deep in a cell phone conversation; three huddled in conversation; another strolled about the room.

Missing funds

MO ST. LOUIS — The Missouri State Council of the Bigger Brother State has diverted \$24 million from a pension fund for the blind over at least a decade, using the money for unauthorized, unrelated expenses.

The council has asked a judge to stop the state Department of Social Services from any more unauthorized spending of the pension fund. The council says the state has used the money for the state budget, tax refunds, building leases and fringe benefits to department employees.

The council, which filed the lawsuit in October, plans to ask a judge to force the state to preserve the fund's \$4.5 million balance for pensioners.

Gates at Central Park

NY NEW YORK — Forklifts were expected to begin moving 15,000 steel bases into place for a public work of art that will allow visitors to Central Park to walk through 7,500 gates hung with panels of saffron-colored fabric.

The temporary work, "The Gates, Central Park, New York, 1979-2005" by artists Christo and Jeanne-Claude, will consist of 16-foot-high gates placed along 23 miles of footpaths, usually at 12-foot intervals. Fabric will be suspended from each gate, falling to 7 feet above the ground.

The artists are paying for the project without sponsorship or donations. Jeanne-Claude said they were hopeful it would cost less than \$21 million, but said they would not know the final amount until the piece is completed.



Eye on the ball

Emily McDonough, 6, of Bay Village, Ohio, is one of 250 Bay Village

Bee Bouncers who showed off their basketball handling skills before a Harlem Globetrotters game at Gund Arena in Cleveland.



Feeding time

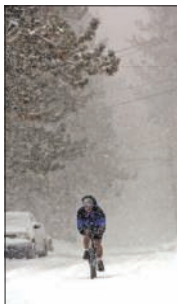
A flock of gulls vie for bread crumbs tossed by Isaac Moore, of Atlanta, on the beach on Hilton Head Island, S.C.



Someone has to fix that Workers watch floodwaters pour into a construction site that turned into a sinkhole in the Sun Valley section of Los Angeles.



Clearing the way A Carson City snowplow worker clears off a street in Kingsington Park in Carson City, Nev., after a snowstorm came through the area.



Chilly trek His bike equipped with studded mountain bike tires, Scott Gomes heads home from work in the snow in South Lake Tahoe, Calif.



Riding into 2005 Wranglers from Del's Triangle 3 Ranch make their last ride of 2004 through the snowy fields of Clark, Colo.

Where the rich rough it

MT BIG SKY — There's no dry cleaner here, no car wash, nowhere to get a blow dry or a manicure. Looking for a sushi restaurant? You'll have to settle for a buffalo burger at the Corral Bar & Grill.

Big Sky is no Aspen, Colo. But the super rich are flocking here anyway.

The lure: the Yellowstone Club, a private, millionaires-only resort community whose amenities more than make up for Big Sky's lack of a traffic light or a designer boutique. Occupying 22 square miles of mostly wilderness, it's the only private club in America that owns a ski mountain and a world-class golf course.

"Sometimes you have to pay to play," says the Yellowstone Club's Web site, which explains that in exchange for an initiation fee of \$250,000, a required property purchase of \$1 million to \$10 million and annual dues of \$16,000, members enjoy a gated wonderland that offers 40 hiking and biking trails, rivers perfect for fly-fishing and an 18-hole course designed by former pro Tom Weiskopf, who is a member.

Airline files bankruptcy

HI HONOLULU — The parent company of Aloha Airlines has filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection, less than a month after announcing it would lay off a dozen top managers and freeze 35 open management jobs because of rising fuel costs.

David A. Banmiller, who took over on Nov. 14 as president and chief executive of Honolulu-based Aloha Airgroup Inc., said the intent was to help bring costs in line with competitors who already have filed for bankruptcy protection.

He cited higher operating costs such as fuel prices and the need to renegotiate aircraft leases as the primary factor in the decision to file.

Coast security upgrade

LA NEW ORLEANS — The Coast Guard plans to use dozens of buoys bobbing off U.S. coastlines from Maine to Alaska to extend the reach of a security system that monitors large vessels heading in and out of ports.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has agreed to let the Coast Guard add transmitters to about 70 buoys by 2007, said Jeff High, a director of the Coast Guard's Maritime Domain Awareness Program in Washington, D.C.

The transmitters will connect to a communications network that in 2004 began receiving signals from all large tankers, barges and cruise vessels heading in and out of major U.S. ports. To legally enter a U.S. port, each vessel must be equipped with a machine that automatically radios information — its cargo, crew list, recent ports of call — to the Coast Guard.

Citizen review of cops

MA BOSTON — Boston's Police Commissioner Kathleen O'Toole has begun the process of creating a new citizen review board to investigate civilian complaints against the department, more than a decade after a failed attempt to create such a panel.

The board would investigate any complaint not resolved by the de-

partment's Internal Affairs Division, which handles allegations of misuse of force, harassment, bias, and other issues. The board could look into shootings involving police officers, and advise O'Toole.

Privacy not protected

SC COLUMBIA — Officials in two South Carolina counties have asked a company to stop posting some county government land records online after concerns about the availability of residents' Social Security numbers.

Officials in York and Berkeley counties asked to have some documents removed from the Web site registered to Dallas-based Affiliated Computer Services, Inc.

ACS handles government record management for counties in several other states, including New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Illinois and Michigan.

Deadly family dispute

MO BUFFALO — A man apparently upset over his share of a family inheritance shot and killed his sister and brother-in-law and then killed himself, authorities said.

Dallas County Coroner Bret Viets said Carolyn Martin called authorities and reported that her brother, Bobby Malone, was trying to get into the couple's home near Buffalo in southwest Missouri.

Malone kicked the door in and shot his brother-in-law, Ronnie Martin, 60, during a confrontation in the house, Viets said.

"The sister had gone out the back door," he said. "He went out the back door, shot her, went back in the house and shot himself."

Traffic deaths up

VT BURLINGTON — Vermont saw the highest number of fatalities on its roads and highways since 1998.

The state had 97 people die in automobile crashes during the last year, including three deaths in one accident on New Year's Eve in Hardwick. The number is a sharp increase from 2003's total of 69 and the highest since 104 lost their lives six years ago.

Cheating alleged

TX HOUSTON — A newspaper investigation has found evidence that a Houston elementary school celebrated for its high test scores obtained at least some of its success from cheating.

"You're expected to cheat there," said Donna Garner, a former teacher at Wesley Elementary who said her fellow teachers instructed her on how to give students answers while administering tests. "There's no way those scores are real."

The Dallas Morning News investigation also found evidence of cheating at two other schools affiliated with Wesley, Wesley, which has been the subject of many flattering profiles, was the spot where President Bush went when he wanted to declare education his No. 1 priority during his run for governor in 1994.

The News' analysis found troubling gaps in test scores at Wesley, Highland Heights, and Osborne elementary — all three in the Acres Homes neighborhood in Houston.

Stories and photos from wire reports

OPINION

Check the files: 'Sharing' movies is stealing

BY EDWIN MEESE III

If John Adams and James Madison were alive today, they surely would marvel at how swiftly information can be exchanged via the Internet.

But they also would be alarmed, I believe, to see ordinary citizens using this extraordinary technology in growing numbers to shoplift copyrighted intellectual property. The Founders possessed, after all, a keen understanding of the threat this type of theft poses to a free society.

Property rights are not a novel concept. After some deliberation, our constitutional framers signaled how important it was to protect intellectual property by instilling the concept in our nation's charter in Article 1, Section 8, with a provision authorizing Congress to "promote the progress of science and the useful arts."

So deeply did the framers, in their founding document, embrace the concept of "progress" advanced through devotion to intellectual labor, that they mention it 24 separate times in the Federalist Papers.

As John Adams warned, "The moment an idea is admitted into society that property is not as sacred as the laws of God, and that there is not a force of law and public justice to protect it, anarchy and tyranny commence." I fear that moment has come.

If thousands of books were stolen from libraries in a single day, school and library officials would immediately put heavy-duty security systems into place. Department store owners, by the same token, would hardly sit still if thieves were making off with armfuls of expensive clothing and jewelry.

Yet many otherwise law-abiding citizens

appear to think there's nothing wrong with doing essentially the same thing when it comes to intellectual property — as if stealing isn't stealing if you can do it with a computer in the comfort of your home or office.

The truth is, there is no difference between shoplifting a DVD from a store and illegally downloading a copyrighted movie from KaZaa.

Stealing intellectual property is just as wrong as the theft of "real" property.

And the vast majority of people use so-called "peer-to-peer" file-sharing networks such as KaZaa, Morphous and Grokster to download music and movies illegally. An overwhelming percentage of the 500 million files being "shared" at any given time are copyright-protected and thus owned by someone else.

Despite all the warning advertisements against the movie trailers, as well as new legal methods to download music and movies (such as you find at iTunes or CinemaNow), wholesale piracy is still taking place. A whopping 4 million users still partake in this dirty little game every day. So what is the victimized industry to do?

The movie industry recently took a bold new step to change the "so what" attitudes of so many. By initiating lawsuits against individuals stealing movies online, as well as revving up their public persuasion campaign, movie studios are taking a stand and making the message crystal clear: Stealing is stealing, and it must stop.

The cultural and economic value of creative films is undeniable. Today, the copyright industries are America's largest and fastest growing economic assets.



Video shops in Afghanistan — such as this one in Kabul — are doing brisk business on bootleg DVDs and CDs. Nineteenth-century U.S. President James Madison said that "government is instituted to protect property of every sort," but intellectual property is not sacred in the States, either.

They account for more than 5 percent of our gross domestic product, pouring \$53 billion into the U.S. economy. The film industry alone provides 580,000 well-paying jobs.

But this awesome engine of economic growth is threatened by the explosive growth of high-tech piracy theft. Smith Barney estimates that if something is not done, movie industry losses will exceed a whopping \$5.4 billion by 2005.

If James Madison was right — that "gov-

ernment is instituted to protect property of every sort," if this objective is "the end of government," and that alone is a just government which impartially secures to every man whatever is his own" — then these movie studios are just doing what any potential thief victim would do: They are protecting property that is rightfully theirs.

Edwin Meeze III, a former U.S. attorney general, is the Ronald Reagan Distinguished Fellow in Public Policy at The Heritage Foundation and chairman of the Washington-based Think Tank's Center for Legal and Judicial Studies.

These stories show what Iraq can be with our help

The Iraq story has always had a very personal dimension for this columnist. Having covered the story since the first Gulf War, I've acquired many Iraqi friends and acquaintances.

Trudy Rubin



who gave up comfortable lives in the United States to return home to rebuild their country. Some suffered under Saddam Hussein. Some have been murdered since his overthrow.

Whenever I think about the tall odds against creating a stable Iraq, their faces come to mind.

It's easy to get angry at gross administration mistakes that led to the current Iraq mess and played into the hands of Iraqi insurgents. But if the Bush administration fails to stabilize Iraq before drawing down U.S. troops, ordinary Iraqis will pay dearly.

Of course, a total U.S. debacle in Iraq would also destabilize the entire Middle East and give al-Qaida a bonanza. But when I think why such a debacle must be prevented, my mind keeps turning to the Iraqis I've known.

I think of Sayid Abdul Majid al-Khoi, the senior revered Shiite cleric. Khoi made a fateful choice to return to southern Iraq with American assistance at the beginning of the war. He wanted to act as a bridge between the Americans and the Shiite religious establishment.

He risked his life in the hope that he could help U.S. officials overcome Shiite distrust of their intentions.

Shortly after he arrived in Najaf, he was hacked to death by followers of a radical Shiite cleric who opposed the U.S. intervention. Did Khoi die in vain, or do his hopes for an

Iraq that openly tolerates all branches of Islam as well as other religions still stand a chance? I think of Fared Yassen, son of a senior Iraqi diplomat who defected after Saddam came to power. Yassen grew up in Europe, graduated from MIT, and spent years working on Iraqi human-rights issues. He left a comfortable life in Cambridge, Mass., to return to Baghdad and work with Sunni moderate politician Adnan Pachachi.

Now in the foreign ministry, Yassen has had relatives murdered and mutilated in recent months, a friend kidnapped, and has escaped from car bombs. But he stays on.

I think of Shiam Hamdan, a young Shiite professor of English literature from the Baghdad slum now known as Sadr City, who wears full religious headress and long robe. Backed by her brothers, who were imprisoned under Saddam, she was brave enough to become a member of a district council appointed by the Americans to represent her neighborhood.

I also think of Riyadi Nassir al-Adhadi, a physician from one of the most anti-American Sunni neighborhoods in Baghdad, who was chosen to sit in the Baghdad City Council set up by U.S. officials. Although he opposed the war, he decided he wanted to work from the inside to change his country — and to end the U.S. occupation. His reputation for helping the poor is such that Sunni insurgents haven't attacked him — last I heard.

I think of Hanna Edwar, who is running a nongovernmental agency, Al-Amal, to help Iraqi women. She organized a national women's conference in June (with U.S. financial aid) in the hopes that Iraqis could learn the meaning of "civil society," the concept that grassroots efforts outside state control are essential counterweights to centralized power.

And I think of my translator, S. (I use his initial because the current situation for Christians in Iraq is so dire he wouldn't

want his name used.) He wrote recently that "the situation in Baghdad is getting worse by the day for us Christians. We are so vulnerable with all these churches (sic) bombings."

"In Mosul, Islamic clerics on Friday preach advice not to buy houses from Christians because they will leave and we will have it for free." He also wrote of threats during Ramadan "that any women without veil will be sprayed with acid regardless of religion."

S. continues to translate for foreigners because he wants to work.

It's hard to be optimistic about Iraq's future right now. The Iraqis I know are mostly among the minority who are willing to risk their lives to try to build a decent Iraq. I know their task is uphill. Yet, given their courage, I have to hope that those mistakes can be repaired, at least enough to give these Iraqis a decent hope of normal lives.

Trudy Rubin is a columnist and editorial-board member for The Philadelphia Inquirer.

Mallard Fillmore

BY BRUCE TINSLEY



T.V. EXECUTIVES:
"WE RESOLVE TO
RELIVE ALL OUR
CHILDHOODS..."

WITH PROGRAMS
THAT WE
THINK ARE
COOL...

...WITH SCRIPTS
THAT ABOUND...

...WITH STUFF ONCE
ONLY FOUND...

...ON THE BATHROOM
WALLS IN
MIDDLE SCHOOL"

Horoscope

Mercury and Pluto join up for a little mischief, and it's the planetary equivalent to someone jumping out and yelling "Boo!" It's startling, not that funny and yet enlightening when taken to an introspective and philosophical level. What were you really afraid of for that split second? Perhaps some skeletons in your closet are ready to be buried.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY

(January 4). You crank out the accomplishments this year. It's like you're a receiver for positive financial energy. Career moves continue to be fortuitous as long as you're truly happy in your position. March is about asking for and receiving the respect and love you deserve. You could go head over heels for Cancer or Aries.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). If you're open to it, a super-interesting chance meeting sparkles up your day. This could come in the form of strangers gazing at one another through a shop window, never exchanging a word but sharing an intense moment.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). When there's a chance to put your talent on the line for all to judge, you have no fear. As long as you're willing to risk rejection, you'll probably come away proud. Echoes of "How about that!" will be heard all up and down the land.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You can't help but get engrossed in someone else's weird torture. Could this preposterous turn of events ever happen to someone as savvy as you? Not likely — and there's something comforting in that fact.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). In a bizarre twist, the opponent acts more like a friend. You'll wonder if you've been rooting for the right side! Invent terms of endearment to let loved ones know how special they are — new nicknames are bonding.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Circumstances are conducive to getting down on a loved one. But all you

have to do is look at someone else's relationship to get that feeling of "Wow, do I ever have it good." Of course, love by comparison is never a great idea.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22).

The issue is reciprocity. You know you're not supposed to give in expectation of what you'll receive, but on the other hand, isn't that just plain good business? If a relationship is unbalanced, it's now glaringly obvious.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23).

The stakes are raised, and it's appropriate to be frightened. If a courage doesn't have to wear a stoic face. In fact, on days like today, courage is a girlish giggle or a sardonic smirk. Enough suffering — time to lighten up.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21).

In the movies, the biggest stars get the most close ups. The same is true in your line of work. If you're going to be a superstar performer, expect some scrutiny, especially this afternoon.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21).

Choose your company with the utmost self-esteem. When you mix with a thoughtful crowd, there's the opportunity for philosophizing and solving the world's problems — at least theoretically.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19).

Relationships are eventful, to put it mildly. It's better than being bored! You could run into your cell-phone charges or cut into your sleep time in the process of sorting this one through.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18).

Your youthful appeal depends on maintaining young innocence — and sometimes immaturity. Face it. There's merit in creating trouble! A reasonable Virgo or Taurus can keep you from getting in over your head.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20).

You'd rather not go too deep into the psychology that drives your actions or the actions of those around you. Why ask why when you can simply get over it? Because of this mind-set, you're made a leader.

Creators Syndicate

Holiday Mathis



Calvin and Hobbes



Jump Start



Zits



Cathy



Hi and Lois



Beetle Bailey



Red and Rover



Better or Worse



Peanuts



Red and Rover



Foxtrot



B.C.



Baby Blues



Spider Man



Blondie



Dilbert



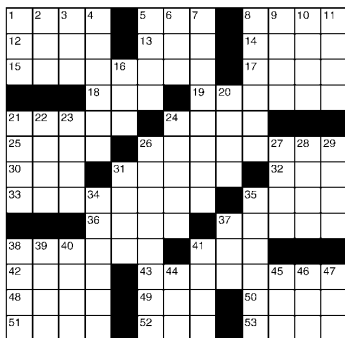
Hagar



Garfield



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



Across

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 Antelope's
playmate | 53 Sudden outburst |
| 5 Insult | Down |
| 8 Workout venues | 1 Elmer, to Bugs |
| 12 Look lecherously | 2 "I" problem |
| 13 Performance | 3 Freddy's street |
| 14 DeNiro/Pacino
movie | 4 Good or bad
name |
| 15 UNIVAC, e.g. | 5 Information |
| 17 Sicilian, spouter | 6 Bauli's milieu |
| 18 "Born in the —" | 7 Long flag |
| 19 Gourmand's
pastime | 8 Minority section |
| 21 Hit | 9 Bigfoot's cousin |
| 24 Soda-shop order | 10 "Death in Venice"
author |
| 25 Top of the head | 11 Unscorted |
| 26 Beethoven, e.g. | 16 Work with |
| 30 Storm center | 20 "Sound of Music"
setting |
| 31 Craving (SI.) | 21 Detail, for show |

Down

- 22 BLT topper
23 Particular
24 "Monopoly"
supply
26 Amends
27 Indian raiment
28 Egress
29 Roger of "Cheers"
31 Big fish story?
34 Conference
35 Cake-sale
preparation
37 Hiatus
38 "B.C." cartoonist
39 Basin accessory
40 Highly rated
41 Foreshadowing
44 Discoverer's cry
45 Bud's buddy
46 Type units
47 Go to seed

Answer to Previous Puzzle



1-4	CRYPTOQUIP
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Y X O E W M X R F X U X U Y X F
K T X P W K F R K R J P V E O K M
J V E O X F K E R P O X F X E D. R M

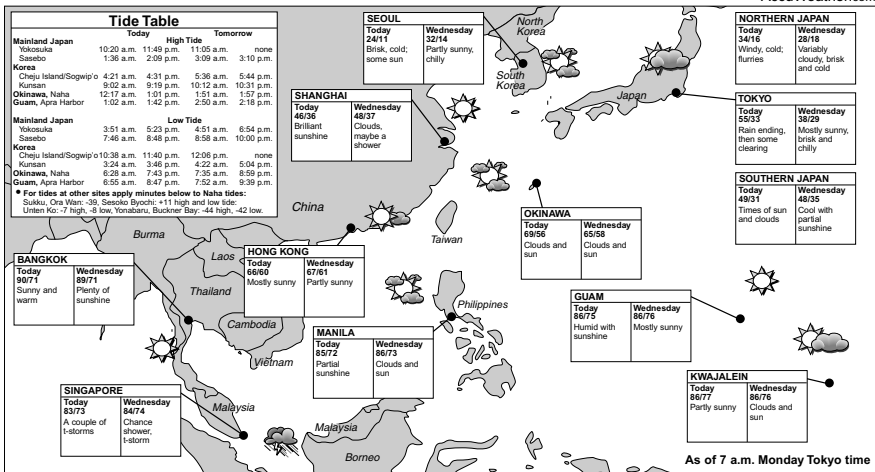
K T E K K J K E D F X O E D D ?
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: I AM NOT TELLING
 ANOTHER SOUL THAT I STUPIDLY ATE SOME
 GLUE. MY LIPS ARE SEALED!

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: K equals T

The Pacific Forecast

All forecasts and maps provided by AccuWeather, Inc. © 2005

AccuWeather.com



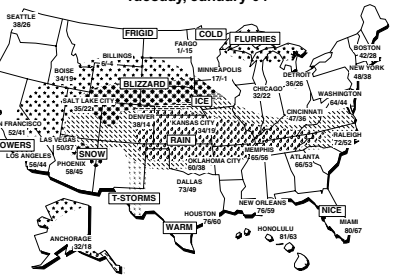
Extended Forecasts

TOKYO Thursday: Mostly cloudy, high 44, low 39. Friday: Partly sunny, high 54, low 39.	KADENA Thursday: Partly sunny, high 71, low 62. Friday: Partly sunny, high 70, low 61.	SEUL Thursday: Snow flurries, high 34, low 19. Friday: Mostly sunny, high 31, low 11.	MANILA Thursday: Periods of clouds and sunshine, high 86, low 72. Friday: Partly sunny, high 85, low 73.	HAGATNA Thursday: Partly sunny, high 87, low 76. Friday: Partly sunny, high 87, low 76.
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Sunday's USA Temperatures

CITY	HIGH/LOW	CITY	HIGH/LOW
Albuquerque	47/37	Los Angeles	58/48
Amarillo	49/37	Little Rock	69/60
Anchorage	30/28	Louisville	64/56
Ashville	63/44	Miami	78/65
Baltimore	48/44	Milwaukee	45/27
Birmingham	73/52	Nashville	66/54
Bismarck	12/-11	New York	44/42
Boise	39/25	Omaha	29/21
Boston	38/36	Orlando	78/56
Brownsville	83/69	Philadelphia	47/43
Buffalo	53/39	Phoenix	62/49
Burlington	36/26	Pittsburgh	60/48
Charleston, SC	72/50	Portland, OR	63/48
Charlotte	69/49	Portland, ME	32/27
Christchurch	62/42	Salt Lake City	41/30
Cleveland	59/48	St. Louis	66/51
Columbus, OH	59/48	St. Antonio	74/67
Duluth	22/0	San Diego	62/48
El Paso	58/47	San Juan	83/70
Hartford	39/34	Tampa	80/60
Helena	20/-3	Tampa	80/60
Indianapolis	60/48	Tulsa	67/50
Jacksonville	76/52	Washington	49/44
Kansas City	41/33	Wichita	43/35

Tuesday, January 04



U.S. Extended Forecast

Stormy weather will affect much of the Southwest Tuesday and Wednesday. Low pressure will slowly move across the Great Basin and southern Rocky Mountains. Rain and mountain snow will accompany the storm as it crosses Arizona, New Mexico, Utah and Colorado. The storm will enter the Plains Tuesday night and Wednesday. Snow may spread into Nebraska and Kansas by Wednesday afternoon. Meanwhile, a slow-moving front will be the focus for rain across the Ohio Valley and the Middle Atlantic. South of the front, unseasonably mild weather will continue across the Southeast and Gulf Coast. Cold air north of the front will spark snow showers over the Great Lakes and northern New England.

Tuesday's Pacific Temperatures

CITY	HIGH/LOW	CITY	HIGH/LOW
Bangkok	90/71	Iwakuni	49/28
Beijing	33/17	Kadena AB	69/56
Camp Casey	24/12	Kunsan AB	32/20
Christchurch	72/51	Kwajalein	86/77
Diego Garcia	86/78	Manila	85/72
Hagatna	86/75	Misawa AB	40/16
Hanoi	69/60	Osan	26/12
Hong Kong	68/60	Perth	81/61
Honolulu	81/63	Pusan	37/24

Tuesday's World Temperatures

CITY	HIGH/LOW	CITY	HIGH/LOW	CITY	HIGH/LOW
Acapulco	92/74	Budapest	38/33	Kabul	36/15
Athens	41/32	Buenos Aires	90/70	Kiev	23/18
Auckland	71/58	Cairo	64/42	Kuwait	68/45
Baghdad	61/40	Cancun	80/68	London	47/35
Barbados	82/64	Cape Town	89/60	Madrid	59/37
Barcelona	51/43	Geneva	40/33	Mexico City	72/49
Berlin	40/34	Istanbul	35/27	Montreal	26/10
Bermuda	70/61	Jerusalem	57/42	Mogadishu	90/73
Brussels	44/34	Johannesburg	86/67	Moscow	21/14
				Warsaw	38/30



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Wolfpack drop second straight

The Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — Johannes Herber and Mike Gansey each scored 15 points Sunday and West Virginia handed No. 17 North Carolina State an 82-69 whipping, the Wolfpack's second straight double-digit defeat.

Patrick Beilen and Tyrone Sally each scored 11 points in a balanced effort by the Mountaineers, who improved to 10-0 for the first time since the 1959-60 season when Jerry West played for West Virginia. Six players scored in double figures and West Virginia shot 59 percent to beat its second straight ranked opponent.

Freshman Andrew Brackman scored 19 points in his first start for the Wolfpack (10-3), who played without leading scorer Julius Hodge. Hodge, last year's Atlantic Coast Conference player of the year, was sidelined with an ankle injury apparently suffered in last week's 63-45 loss to St. John's.

Men's
Top 25
roundup

Given the way the Mountaineers played, it might not have mattered. West Virginia, coming off a 71-65 victory over No. 20 George Washing-

ton, shot the ball confidently from the start, played effective and physical defense and got out in transition to get several easy baskets. The Mountaineers led 43-36 at halftime, then hit 10 of their first 15 shots after the break to build a 14-point lead with about 7½ minutes left.

No. 4 North Carolina 105, William & Mary 66: At Chapel Hill, N.C., Sean May continued his recent tear, scoring 24 points on 9-for-13 shooting.

Raymond Felton finally missed a three-pointer, ending his run of 12 straight, but that was about the only problem for North Carolina (12-1). The Tar Heels have won 12 in a row since losing to Santa Clara in the opener, and start the bulk of the Atlantic Coast Conference schedule Saturday against No. 24 Maryland.

Jawad Williams had 19 points, Rashad McCants added 15 and Felton finished with 12 assists for North Carolina. In the past seven games, May is shooting 66 percent and averaging 17.4 points, all since he scored a season-low eight points at Indiana on Dec. 1.

The Tar Heels scored more than 100 points for the second straight game, the first time that's happened in exactly 10 years, when they beat Marshall 116-62. Getting there wasn't easy in this one, since a three-point play by McCants accounted for their only points in the first 4½ minutes.

A 14-0 run over a 3-minute span late in the first half helped North Carolina take control, and 11 consecutive points to start the final 20 minutes made it 64-32.

Corey Coffeld and Nate Loehrke each had 16 points for William & Mary (4-6). After a quick start — it was tied at 20 mid-way through the first half — the Tribe fell apart. They went nearly 11 minutes spanning halftime with only two baskets, and committed 11 of their 19 turnovers in the opening half.

William & Mary was within 28-25 on a jumper by Cofield with about seven minutes left in the first half. Later, with the Tar Heels leading by eight, Williams scored to start a 14-0 run, which included a

powerful dunk by Marvin Williams after a nifty pass from Felton.

Jawad Williams finished it off by tipping in a missed three-point attempt by Melvin Scott and North Carolina led 53-32 at half-time.

No. 13 Washington 76, Stanford 73: At Seattle, Mike Jensen scored 17 points to pace Washington (12-1, 2-0 Pac-10) to its eighth straight victory while dropping two-time defending league champion Stanford (6-6) to 0-2 in the league for the first time since 1991.

Jensen, who hit six of nine shots, made two free throws with 12 seconds to play to provide the final margin. Stanford's Nick Robinson missed a three-pointer in the final seconds.

Tre Simmons also had 17 points for Washington and Nate Robinson added 10.

Chris Hernandez and Dan Grunfeld each had 15 points for Stanford.

No. 14 Arizona 97. Arizona St. 79. At

Tucson, Salim Stoudamire had 15 of his 18 points in the second half, helping Arizona turn a close game into a rout. Channing Frye had a season-high 21 points and Mustafa Shakur added 20, including four three-pointers, as the Wildcats (11-2) won their eighth straight.

Arizona State's Ike Diogu had 23 points, 11 rebounds and five blocks, but went nearly 24 minutes without a field goal when the game was still in doubt as the Sun Devils (11-2) had a nine-game winning streak snapped.

No. 19 Louisville 98, Tennessee St. 64: At Louisville, Ky., junior Francisco Garcia matched his career high with 29 points, including eight straight during a 27-4 run.

Garcia hit four three-pointers and Larry O'Bannon added three over Tennessee State's zone as the Cardinals (11-2) hit 12 from behind the arc despite the absence of three-point specialist Taquan Dean, out with back spasms.

Tennessee State (5-9) pulled within 36-30 early in the second half on a three-pointer by Bruce Price and a dunk by Roshaun Bowens.

Perrin Johnson answered for Louisville, putting in his own miss and adding a free throw to ignite a 14-2 run. Brad Gianiny contributed a three-pointer and threaded a bounce pass to Garcia for a dunk.



North Carolina's Marvin Williams (24) grabs a rebound away from William & Mary's Corey Cofield during the first half of Sunday's game at Chapel Hill, N.C. The No. 4 Tar Heels beat William & Mary 105-66.

Garcia then reeled off eight consecutive points — five free throws and a three-point er — during a 13-2 run that made it 63-34.

In a Saturday game

No. 18 Alabama 68, New Orleans 57
At Tuscaloosa, Ala., Earnest Shelton scored 14 points and Jermario Davidson had 12 points and nine rebounds to help Alabama beat New Orleans.

Ronald Steele added 10 points for the Crimson Tide (11-2). Bo McCalebb led New Orleans (5-8) with 26 points and Jamie McNeilly had 11.

Alabama, which will open Southeastern Conference play Wednesday night at Vanderbilt, took a 15-5 lead and led by as many as 18 points in the first half en route to a 41-24 halftime lead. The Tide increased the margin to 24 at 45-21 early in the second half, but the Privateers used an 11-2 spurt to cut it to 65-55.

Cornell pulls away late to get by Army

The Associated Press

WEST POINT, N.Y. — Lenny Collins scored 18 points to lead three players in double figures as Cornell pulled away late for a 58-51 victory over Army on Sunday afternoon.

Luke Slater paced the Black Knights with 15 points and six rebounds and Jimmy Sewell had 10 points.

Cody Toppert had 12 points for Cornell and Eric Taylor added 11.

Collins hit a crucial three-pointer with 2:46 to play, giving Cornell (4-7) the lead for good at 50-48. Collins' bucket was part of a game-ending 13-5 run by the Big Red, who downed Army for the sixth consecutive season.

The Black Knights (2-9) had chances in the final 30 seconds, but guard Travis Owsley missed a shot in the lane and Matt Bell's baseline jumper bounced off the rim.

Army was plagued by 20 turnovers.

STRIPES CLASSIFIED

[illegible]

Russian tennis star Maria Sharapova yuks it up with an elephant in Thailand's Chiang Mai province a day before playing Venus Williams in a charity exhibition to help raise money for the country's tsunami victims.

AP



Sharapova wallops Williams and then auctions her racket

The Associated Press

CHIANG MAI, Thailand — Wimbledon champion Maria Sharapova stamped her authority over Venus Williams on Sunday, using strong baseline strokes to overpower the American 6-4, 6-3 in an exhibition match.

The match began with a 30-second tribute to victims of the tsunami that killed more than 123,000 people from Asia to Africa, including nearly 5,000 confirmed dead

Sports briefs

in Thailand. It ended with the players auctioning off their rackets for \$2,500.

The players are preparing for the Australian Open, the season's first Grand Slam event, in two weeks.

Williams and Sharapova next

head to Hong Kong for another exhibition match.

Pennetta upsets Decby

GOLD COAST, Australia — Flavia Pennetta of Italy beat former champion and sixth-seeded Nathalie Decby of France 7-6 (9-7), 6-1 on the opening day of the Australian women's hardcourt championships.

Decby, the 2003 champion, has made at least the quarterfinals of this event four times, but struggled Sunday in this warmup for the Australian Open.

Also, fifth-seeded Silvia Farina Elia of Italy beat Stephanie Foretz of France 6-3, 7-5; eighth-seeded Magdalena Maleeva of Bulgaria defeated Yuliana Fedak of Ukraine 6-4, 6-1. Denisa Chladkova of the Czech Republic defeated Severine Beltrame of France 4-6, 6-4, 7-5; and Li Na of China beat Tatiana Garbin of Italy 6-3, 6-1.

Argentina wins in Hopman

PERTH, Australia — Guillermo Coria beat David Sanguinetti 6-1, 7-6 (7-4) Sunday and then teamed with Gisela Dulko to win the mixed doubles, giving Argentina a 2-1 victory over Italy in the opener of the eight-nation Hopman Cup team tournament, an Australian Open tuneup.

Francesco Schiavone defeated Dulko 6-1, 6-3 in the first match.

Coria, last year's losing finalist in the French Open, evened the series by winning his singles. Coria and Dulko then topped Schiavone and Sanguinetti 7-5, 6-0 in the deciding mixed doubles.

U.S. tops Sweden

GRAND FORKS, N.D. — Phil Kessel scored three goals and added an assist to help the United States advance to the semifinals of the world junior championships with an 8-2 victory over Sweden on Saturday night.

Kevin Porter, Drew Stafford, Robbie Schremp, Ryan Suter and Tim Hensick also scored for the defending champion Americans, who advanced to face Russia.

In the other semifinal, tournament favorite Canada plays the Czech Republic.

The 17-year-old Kessel gave the United States a 3-1 lead in the second period and added two goals in a 3:06 span early in the third.

Al Montoya made 29 saves, allowing only Loui Erickson's two goals.

The Czech Republic advanced with a 3-0 victory over Finland. Marek Schwarz made 21 saves, and Petr Vrana, Rostislav Olesz and Roman Cervenka scored goals.

German edges Lodwick

RUHPOLDING, Germany — Germany's Ronny Ackermann shook off American Todd Lodwick over the final 3 kilometers of the cross-country skiing portion Sunday to win his fourth nordic combined World Cup event of the season.

Ackermann finished in 20 minutes, 13.3 seconds — 13.1 seconds ahead of Lodwick. The event had one ski jump and a 7.5-kilometer sprint. Ackermann and Lodwick raced together until the German pulled away at the 5.3 kilometer mark.

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Ravens do the math to get into playoffs

The Associated Press

BALTIMORE — The Baltimore Ravens did their part to get into the playoffs, then dashed home to discover their fate.

"Time for a little Chinese food and a little game-watching," Ravens coach Brian Billick said after watching his team stumble past the Miami Dolphins 30-23 Sunday.

Baltimore needed to beat the Dolphins and have three other games fall its way to earn a wild-card berth. After fulfilling their share of the equation, the Ravens left the field unsure of their postseason fate.

Baltimore (9-7) had to have Buffalo lose to Indianapolis, Denver lose to Indianapolis and Jacksonville either tie or lose to Oakland. Buffalo lost while the Ravens played, and the other two games began soon after Baltimore was done.

"I'm in front of the TV. I want to see what's going on," Ravens linebacker Terrell Suggs said. "If there is anybody to blame for the situation, it's definitely us. We just have to see what happens."

Losses earlier in the season to Cleveland, Kansas City and Cincinnati put the Ravens in a situation where they had to depend on others to reach the postseason. That same kind of incoherent play was on display Sunday during a game that Baltimore should have won handily.

Playing against a downtrodden Miami team that was forced to



start third-string quarterback Sage Rosenfels, Baltimore made a 27-7 lead, then allowed the Dolphins to close to 27-21 before holding on.

"If we could win 40-7, that would be great," Ravens quarterback Kyle Boller said, "but that's the way it is."

Jamal Lewis scored a touchdown and ran for 167 yards, giving him 1,006 for the season.

Baltimore's Jarrett Johnson returned an interception for a score and teammate Ed Reed got his ninth interception and returned it 41 yards to get an NFL record for return yardage in a season (358).

"He threw me the football," Reed said with a grin. "It's just another record; it will be up there for however long it will be up there."

But the Ravens' defense, playing without injured linebacker Ray Lewis (broken wrist), was burned for a touchdown on the first play from scrimmage and later yielded a 99-yard drive against a team that concluded its worst season since 1969.

The Dolphins (4-12) finished 3-4 under interim coach Jim Bates.

Nick Saban has already been hired to coach Miami next season.

"When I took over eight weeks

ago we were 1-8 and it was a tough situation," Bates said. "For the last seven football games, we've been in every one. Today we were down 27-7 — 20 points — and there's no quit in the football team. We came back and still had a chance to get back in it."

Miami used a 95-yard kickoff return by Wes Welker — the Dolphins' first for a score since 1989 — and a 35-yard TD run by Sammy Morris to get to 27-21.

It was 30-21 when Travis Minor appeared to score a touchdown for Miami, but officials ruled he came up short and Anthony Weaver ended the drive with an interception.

Rosenfels launched his first NFL start in grand style, throwing a 76-yard touchdown pass to Chris Chambers on his initial play.

Starting for injured A.J. Feeley (ribs), Rosenfels went 16-for-38 for 264 yards and three interceptions.

Packers 31, Bears 14: At Chicago, Brett Favre's short work day was a productive one. Favre and Green Bay warmed up for the playoffs with a convincing win. Green Bay (10-6), the third seed in the NFC, will host a playoff game next weekend at Lambeau Field.

Favre played the first quarter and one series in the second, going 9-of-13 for 196 yards and two touchdowns as the Packers beat the Bears (5-11) in the 21st time in the last 26 meetings — including 11 straight on the road.

Favre also went over 4,000 yards passing in a season for the fourth time in his career and reached 30 TD passes for an eighth time before backup Craig Nall took over.

Wearing '92 on their helmets in memory of former teammate Reggie White, the Packers gave up an early touchdown before roaring to a 28-7 halftime lead against their oldest rival.

Titans 24, Lions 19: Tennessee promised it wouldn't quit until the season ended. They certainly didn't.

Billy Volek threw for 175 yards and a touchdown before being knocked out of the game in the fourth quarter, and the Titans held on for the victory. Tennessee snapped its five-game losing skid. The Titans (5-11) were without 14 players from their opening day roster because of injuries, but they had more than enough to handle Detroit (6-10).

The Lions trailed 24-13 after a 40-yard field goal by Gary Anderson, but nearly rallied after Detroit end James Hall knocked Volek out of the game with a sprained right shoulder.

Detroit pulled to 24-19 following a 17-yard TD pass from Joey Harrington to Roy Williams with 4:06 left. Tennessee challenged the call, but the referee upheld the score, saying the ball came out after Williams crossed the goal line.

Patriots 21, 49ers 7: Host New England heads into the play-

offs with another win and some momentum.

They overcame a sloppy first half against San Francisco, who matched their franchise-worst 2-14 record and clinched the top pick in this year's draft.

Tom Brady threw two touchdown passes after losing an interception and a fumble. Carey Johnson ran for 116 yards and one touchdown but also lost a fumble. A penalty nullified Bethel Johnson's punt return for a touchdown at the end of the 49ers' first drive.

And the Patriots' regular-season record of scoring first in 20 straight games ended on Ken Dorsey's 4-yard pass to third-string tight end Steve Bush late in the first quarter. They had scored first in 23 consecutive games, including the playoffs, but couldn't do it against the team that began the day having allowed the most points in the NFL this season.

Bengals 38, Eagles 10: Philadelphia's junior varsity played like the old Cincinnati Bengals. With Donovan McNabb and several other starters sitting out, the Eagles' backups were thoroughly dominated.

Rudi Johnson ran for three touchdowns and Jon Kincaid threw a scoring pass, helping the Bengals win their second straight game to finish 8-8 for the second year in a row.

The Eagles (13-3) had five turnovers in their worst performance since a 38-0 loss to Seattle in the 1998 season opener.

Vikings: Redskins end Gibbs' season on high note

VIKINGS, FROM BACK PAGE

into the playoffs. Yeah, that's true," Tice said. "For this moment, we start off the same with 0-0. Unfortunately, we certainly don't come into this with any tremendous rhythm."

As Tice spoke, the lights went out in the news conference room for a few seconds.

"Believe me, that's how our whole season's gone," he said.

The Redskins (6-10) rallied to give a spirited finishing performance to Joe Gibbs' disappointing comeback season, his worst in 13 years with the Redskins. The Hall of Fame coach plans to keep working nonstop to restore his legacy.

"I'm anxious to get started. The offseason will be a big time for me. I think it will be one of the most important six months of my coaching career, trying to help ourselves every way we can," Gibbs said. "I think the most important thing is that our guys went and finished strong and they made a commitment there with nothing on the line but pride."

Patrick Ramsey completed 17 of 26 passes for 216 yards with two touchdowns and one interception, and Lyle Bettis ran 26 times for a career-high 118 yards subbing for injured back Clinton Portis.

The Redskins scored more than two touchdowns for only the second time all season.

"Maybe they didn't think we had anything to play for," defensive end Renaldo Wynn said. "They don't know this team."

The defense rattled Minnesota quarterback Daunte Culpepper with four sacks and several times forced him to throw the ball away.

Culpepper completed 27 of 44 passes for

299 yards and two touchdowns. His last pass was a 38-yard desperation touchdown to Marcus Robinson with 2 seconds remaining.

The Vikings failed to recover the subsequent onside kick, then went to the locker room and waited for the Saints to finish off a 21-18 win. They spoke of getting revenge on the Packers, who beat Minnesota twice this season on a late-second field goal pass.

"Nobody has won the Super Bowl at 8-8," Culpepper said. "But my whole life I have been defining history, so it ain't no thing for me to do it again."

Moss caught just five passes for 66 yards, including an acrobatic 28-yard touchdown pass over safety Sean Taylor that cut the Redskins' lead to 14-10 late in the third quarter.

The Vikings' offensive troubles were startling, considering they were playing a depleted Redskins defense. Fred Smoot didn't play because of a bruised kidney, and Shaun Springs missed part of the third quarter after falling ill at halftime.

The loss would have been uglier were it not for defensive tackle Kevin Williams, who had two sacks and created two turnovers in late Minnesota's 25-yard line. Williams interrupted a pass in the first half and stripped the ball from Ramsey in the second.

Yet, the Vikings are playoff-bound. "It is mixed emotions," Burleson said. "The best emotion is excitement. Any team would be happy to get into the playoffs."

Notes: Vikings strong safety Corey Chavous' status for the playoffs is in doubt after he broke his left elbow on a running play. Minnesota receiver Kelly Campbell sprained his right shoulder. The Redskins committed three penalties for a season-low 13 yards. They fell 55 yards short of breaking the franchise record of 1,110 set in 1948.



Minnesota quarterback Daunte Culpepper (11) looks to release the ball as he is pressured by Washington defender Renaldo Wynn (97) during the Vikings 21-18 loss to the Redskins on Sunday at FedEx Field in Landover, Md.

NFL scoreboards

American Conference

	East	West
W	L	T
Y-New England	10	2
N.Y. Jets	10	6
Buffalo	9	5
Miami	10	2
Indianapolis	12	3
Jacksonville	8	7
Houston	7	9
Tennessee	11	3
Pittsburgh	1	1
Baltimore	9	7
Cincinnati	10	7
Cleveland	11	2
San Diego	14	0
Denver	10	6
Kansas City	7	8
Oakland	5	10

National Conference

	East	West
W	L	T
Philadelphia	13	3
Dallas	6	10
Green Bay	10	3
N.Y. Giants	10	3
Atlanta	4	8
New Orleans	8	8
Carolina	9	4
Tampa Bay	10	3
Green Bay	10	6
Minnesota	10	5
Detroit	6	10
Chicago	11	3
Seattle	8	7
St. Louis	8	8
San Francisco	2	14

2-clinched wild card

Sunday's games

Tennessee 24, Denver 9	1
Baltimore 30, Miami 23	1
Green Bay 21, Chicago 16	1
St. Louis 32, N.Y. Jets 25	1
Cleveland 22, Houston 14	1
Washington 21, Minnesota 18	1
Washington 21, Buffalo 24	1
Orlando 18, Carolina 8	1
New England 21, San Francisco 7	1
Atlanta at Seattle	1
Tampa Bay at Philadelphia 10	1
Kansas City at San Diego	1
Indianapolis at Denver	1
Jacksonville at Oakland	1
Dallas at St. Louis	1

End of regular season

Rams beat Jets in OT, earn trip to playoffs

N.Y. also qualifies for postseason

By R.B. FALLSTROM
The Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — The St. Louis Rams won a finale that, in the end, they needed much more than the New York Jets.

Marc Bulger threw for 450 yards and three touchdowns and Jeff Wilkins kicked a 31-yard field goal with 3:03 left in overtime Sunday to give the Rams a 32-29 victory over the New York Jets, clinching their fourth playoff berth in five seasons under coach Mike Martz.

The Rams' (8-8) won their last two games to qualify as the NFC wild card, and had a chance to win the West if the Seattle Seahawks lost to the Atlanta Falcons last Sunday. St. Louis also finished 6-2 at home.

The Rams' effort took on more meaning when Minnesota lost to the Washington Redskins, because St. Louis had to win to make it into the postseason. The Jets (10-6) qualified well before overtime began, when Buffalo lost 29-24 to Pittsburgh.

Despite the loss, New York made the playoffs for the third time in four seasons under coach Herman Edwards.

The Jets play at San Diego next weekend but enter the playoffs on a bit of a downer. They have gone 5-6 since winning their first five games.

They also lost wide receiver Wayne Chrebet (concussion) in the first half.

Curtis Martin had 153 yards on 28 carries and moved into fourth place on the NFL career rushing list.

The Jets played to win in overtime, keeping Chad Pennington and Martin on the field. Doug Briem's miss on a 53-yard field goal attempt opened the door for the Rams' final drive.

St. Louis got great field position at its 43, and Bulger needed only five plays to get the Rams in position for Wilkins' game-winner. Wilkins split the uprights on first down after Bulger's 22-yard swing pass to Steven Jackson. Bulger completed 29 of 39 passes.

The Rams won with a revived offense, scoring more than 20 points for the first time in seven weeks. They had scoring drives of three and one play in the first half, including a 44-yard catch by Torry Holt near the end of the half right after a Jets punt.



St. Louis Rams WR Torry Holt catches a 44-yard TD pass from QB Marc Bulger over New York Jets' Erik Coleman (26), and David Barrett during the second quarter on Sunday. Holt became the first player in NFL history with five consecutive 1,300-yard receiving seasons.

St. Louis appeared to have taken control early in the third quarter when Jackson broke two tackles on a 20-yard run that made it 21-10. But the Jets quickly recaptured the momentum.

Jerricho Cotchery returned the ensuing kickoff 94 yards to cut the gap to four. Less than a minute later, Jason Ferguson stripped the ball from Isaac Bruce after a reception and Donnie Abraham recovered to set up a 33-yard field goal by Brian.

The Jets took a 26-21 lead when Jonathan Vilma intercepted a tipped pass and returned it 38 yards for a score. The ensuing 2-point conversion failed when Pennington threw incomplete.

St. Louis retook the lead with 5:06 remaining in regulation when two Jets defenders collided, allowing Torry Holt to break free on a 19-yard TD reception. Jackson's conversion run made it a tie, but the Jets tied it when Brian kicked a 27-yard field goal with 3 seconds remaining.

Browns end dismal season with win

The Associated Press

HOUSTON — The Cleveland Browns now have two things to celebrate: the end of their nine-game losing streak and, mercifully, the end of their miserable season.

Kelly Holcomb's return to the lineup provided a lift to the punchless Browns' offense, and Cleveland surprised the Houston Texans with a thoroughly dominating effort in a 22-14 victory on Sunday in the season finale for both teams.

Lee Suggs had his third straight 100-yard rushing day and Phil Dawson kicked five field goals, giving Browns interim coach Terry Robiskie his only victory in five games since replacing Butch Davis on Nov. 30.

Since Davis resigned following

a wacky loss to Cincinnati, Robiskie and many of the players unabashedly campaigned for turning his gig into a full-time job. The inspired performance by the Browns (4-12) spoke volumes about the team's belief in the wildly popular former offensive coordinator.

At the end, several Cleveland players doused the ecstatic Robiskie with a Gatorade cooler and many more embraced him. In the raucous locker room after the game, players teased Robiskie into doing a silly dance on a table.

The Browns will probably start another franchise makeover Monday, starting with a search for a third personnel chief and, most likely, a fourth coach since their inaugural season in 1999.

His performance, Sunday might indicate the Browns aren't as bad as many think.

Cleveland looked much better with Holcomb than rookie Luke McCown at the helm of its offense.

After missing more than a month with cracked ribs, Holcomb led the Browns to their best offensive performance since a 58-48 loss to the Bengals. Holcomb started that game, throwing for five TDs to tie a franchise record.

Against the Texans, Holcomb was 20-for-29 for 228 yards with a touchdown and two interceptions. Suggs had 131 yards on 26 carries and, more importantly, no fumbles a week after coughing up the ball three times in a loss at Miami.

Domanick Davis scored on a 1-yard run and finished with 103 yards on 17 carries for Houston (7-9).

Cleveland Browns interim coach Terry Robiskie, right, is congratulated by defensive linemen Kenan Lang after the Browns beat the Houston Texans 22-14 Sunday. The victory was Robiskie's first as the Browns' coach.

Steelers' subs keep Bills from first playoff berth since '99

The Associated Press

ORCHARD PARK, N.Y. — The Pittsburgh Steelers are so good that they ended Buffalo's playoff hopes with their backups.

Fourth-string running back Willie Parker had 102 yards rushing and backup linebacker James Harrison returned a fumble 18 yards for a touchdown, helping seal the Steelers' 29-24 victory over Buffalo on Sunday. The Steelers won their 14th straight to match the record set by Miami in 1972 and became the fourth team in NFL history to finish 15-1.

The Bills (9-7) had a six-game win streak snapped, and squandered a chance to win their first playoff spot since 1999.

Their loss automatically put the New York Jets in.

Buffalo made it close when Willie McGahee scored his second touchdown of the game on a 1-yard run with 78 seconds left. But the Bills' outside kick failed when Steelers cornerback Ike Taylor recovered the ball.

It was an exceptional performance by the Steelers, who al-

ready had clinched home-field advantage in the playoffs. They won without quarterback Ben Roethlisberger, running back Jerome Bettis, receiver Plaxico Burress and linebacker Kendrick Bell. And from the third quarter on, their lineup included quarterback Brian T. Ponder, promoted from the team's practice squad last week, and a defense with only five starters.

St. Pierre, who replaced Tommy Maddox late in the third quarter, missed on his one pass at-

tempt in an NFL debut that consisted of him handing the ball to Parker.

Maddox went 12-for-24 for 120 yards, a touchdown and two interceptions.

The game turned late in the third quarter after Buffalo's Ryan Lindell missed wide right on a 28-yard field-goal attempt that left the Bills clinging to a 17-16 lead.

The Steelers responded on their next drive when Jeff Reed hit a 37-yarder, set up by Parker's 58-yard run.

Win over Panthers not enough for Saints

By JENNA FRYER
The Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Masters of the late-season flop, the New Orleans Saints finally won a game that mattered.

Then they had to wait to see just how much it mattered.

Needing to beat the Carolina Panthers to stay in playoff contention, the Saints did their part with a 21-18 victory on Sunday. But they needed outside help to get in, and failed to get it. Halfway across the country, the New Orleans Rams beat the New York Jets 32-29 in overtime, ending the season for the Saints.

Aaron Brooks passed for 216 yards and threw a 44-yard touchdown pass to Joe Horn, and the Saints (8-8) forced three turnovers and used relentless pressure on Jake Delhomme, sinking him six times.

As the Panthers (7-9) lined up for a desperation 60-yard field goal attempt to send the game into overtime, Tony Bryant blocked John Kasay's kick to preserve the victory. Because the Panthers lost, Minnesota made the playoffs even though the Vikings fell to Washington 21-18.

The victory capped an impressive turnaround for the Saints and might have saved coach Jim Haslett's job. On shaky ground a month ago when New Orleans was 4-8, the Saints rallied to win their final four.

The loss ended Carolina's push to make the playoffs. The defending NFC champion lost seven of their first eight games and lost 14 players to injury before rallying behind a patchwork group of replacements.

But without a core group of skill players, the run finally ended for the Panthers in one of Delhomme's worst games in Carolina.

Off all day, the majority of his passes were uncatchable. They sailed over his receivers, dropped short in front of them, and a few were even out of bounds.

Even his 9-yard touchdown pass to Muhsin Muhammad was iffy. Muhammad had to reach high to get it over his defender, and barely got his feet in bounds.

He had two costly fumbles and finished 24-for-50 for 307 yards.

Delhomme had two decent drives near the end of the game, throwing a 7-yard TD pass to Muhammad and completing the 2-point conversion to Mike Seidman to make it 21-18 with 5:05 left.

But after a defensive stop, he was flat again. He threw two incompletions and was sacked by Darren Howard to end any momentum the Panthers had grabbed.

The Saints couldn't run out the clock, though, and the Panthers got one last chance with the ball on the New Orleans 2 and 50 seconds to play. Two completions and a hook-and-ladder set up Kasay's failed attempt.

Sugar Bowl bittersweet for No. 3 Auburn

Even with a win over No. 9 Virginia Tech, undefeated Tigers would be out of title picture

BY NANCY ARMOUR

The Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — Poor Auburn.

A 12-0 record and SEC title would be enough to make the Tigers a front-runner for the national title most years — or at least cause a spirited debate about who's No. 1.

But this isn't most years.

While Southern California and Oklahoma prepare for their Orange Bowl matchup that probably will decide an undisputed national title, Auburn can only watch like the kid with his nose pressed up against the glass. No matter what the Tigers do in Monday night's Sugar Bowl, they have little, if any, chance of being No. 1.

To be honest with you, it gives us some motivation," running back Carnell Williams said. "Everybody's mad, disappointed, hurt. But why should we stop here and let that be a setback? Why not go out on Jan. 7 and try to show people that the system is whacked? They messed up. We are the best team."

If this scenario sounds familiar, well, it is. Only No. 3 Auburn's plight is even more pitiful than top-ranked Southern California's being left out of the Bowl Championship Series title game last year. The Trojans at least had the hope of splitting the national title because they were No. 1 in both polls, and that's exactly what happened. Southern California kept its No. 1 ranking in the Associated Press Top 25 poll, while LSU won the BCS crown.

"If it happens we're fortunate enough to win, perhaps some



other poll might decide we deserve to be No. 1," said Ed Richardson, the interim president at Auburn.

But Auburn is behind No. 1 Southern California and No. 2 Oklahoma, who have identical 12-0 records. Even if Auburn beats No. 9 Virginia Tech (10-2) in one of those laughers usually reserved for nonconference foes, the Tigers are unlikely to leapfrog the Orange Bowl winner or be anything other than the answer to a trivia question.

No team from a major conference has gone unbeaten without getting at least a share of the national title since Penn State in 1994. The Nitray Lions were 12-0 then and won the Rose Bowl, but Nebraska was 13-0 and a consensus champion.

"This is all mythical," Auburn coach Tommy Tuberville said.

"When you don't have a playoff of four, eight or 16 teams, it's picked by other people. We think we're the best team in the country, and we've played like it so far most of the time this year. But again, that's for other people to decide."



Auburn quarterback Jason Campbell was the SEC's offensive player of the year this season, setting career highs with 19 touchdown passes and 2,511 yards passing. He threw only six interceptions.

The BCS tweaked its formula this year in hopes of avoiding messes just like this, emphasizing the human polls over computers. But as Auburn and Utah and California found out, the polls aren't foolproof, either.

While Southern California and Oklahoma have been the national title favorites all year, Auburn was way down at No. 17 in the preseason poll. That's a lot of ground to make up, and the Tigers had little hope of doing it when USC and Oklahoma kept winning.

This is a perfect example of how we need to wait until Oct. 1 or Oct. 15 before we do those polls, because it's just a fact that things change," said Virginia Tech coach Frank Beamer, who

votes in the coaches poll. "We started off with Southern Cal one, Oklahoma two and Auburn three. About five or six weeks from the end, I just thought Auburn was playing the best football. That's no slight to Oklahoma, but I had Southern Cal one, Auburn two and Oklahoma three."

Auburn climbed as high as a tie for second with Oklahoma in the Nov. 14 AP poll, but dropped back to third the following week. Even a victory over then-No. 15 Tennessee — the Tigers' second of the year — in the SEC championship game couldn't give them the boost they needed.

No offense to USC and Heisman Trophy winner Matt Leinart or to Oklahoma, playing for its

second national title in five years, but Auburn might be the best story in college football this year.

Certainly no team has overcome more than the Tigers to get where they are.

A soap opera writer couldn't have scripted Auburn's 2003 season.

The Tigers didn't come close to meeting their lofty expectations, and a small cabal of university leaders embarrassed themselves and the school and humiliated Tuberville with their bungled attempt to push the coach out.

In a rare display of decorum in athletics, Tuberville refused to fire back at his detractors. That class struck a chord with his players, and they credit the turmoil for bringing them even closer.

Williams, fellow running back Ronnie Brown and cornerback Carlos Rogers decided to put the NFL on hold and return for their senior seasons.

This could be a special season because clear in the third game, when the Tigers rallied to beat then-No. 5 LSU 10-9 on a touchdown with 1:14 left. They rolled from there, winning all but one of their games by double digits. Their 12-0 record is the best in Auburn history, and their SEC title was the school's first since 1989.

"We really have done something special this year by going 12-0 so far," offensive tackle Marcus McNeill said. "We want to end this perfect season and go down as one of Auburn's greatest seasons."

And the Tigers will have to be content with that. Because this year, perfect isn't quite good enough.

Orange Bowl as perfect a matchup as BCS allows

BY RALPH D. RUSSO

The Associated Press

MIAMI — Pete Carroll calls this one the perfect matchup, and in many ways it is: USC vs. Oklahoma in the Orange Bowl for the national title.

Preseason favorites to make it to Miami, the Trojans and Sooners were No. 1 and No. 2 in the polls all year. They feared the two top Heisman Trophy winners and about a dozen All-Americans between them.

Two of college football's most storied and tradition-rich programs, Oklahoma and Southern California have 11 AP national titles combined.

Of course, rarely is anything ever perfect when the Bowl Championship Series is involved.

Just ask Auburn. The top-ranked Trojans (12-0) and No. 2 Sooners (12-0) meet Tuesday night for a national championship that will wrap up the college football season, but not necessarily the debate over who's No. 1.

On Monday night, No. 3 Auburn puts its 12-0 record on the

No. 1 USC, No. 2 Oklahoma have been on path to title game all season



line against Virginia Tech in the Sugar Bowl with a chance to finish a perfect season that will compare favorably with that of the Orange Bowl winner.

"It stinks the way it played out this year for them," Oklahoma quarterback Jason White said. "They're a great team. They probably deserve to be in this championship game just as much as any other one of us. But that's the way it worked out for that."

USC and Oklahoma were right at the center of last year's BCS mess. The Trojans were left out of

the BCS title game despite being No. 1 in the polls. The Sooners got in despite a lopsided loss in the Big 12 championship game.

In the end, USC finished on top in the Associated Press Top 25 and LSU beat Oklahoma to win the BCS crown.

"We were playing for the title in our minds last year," Carroll, the Trojans' coach, said. "But this year, there's an added dimension."

The BCS guys were determined to make sure a consensus No. 1 would never again be left out of the title game, so this year's formula emphasized the polls over the computers.

One problem solved. Next problem: There are three unbeaten teams, all clearly worthy of a spot in the title game. For that, there is no BCS solution.

"I'd love to see a playoff, though this does feel a little like a playoff," Carroll said. "But I'm not hopeful for that."

At least this season neither title game participant is being labeled undeserving, as the Sooners were

last season after being throttled 35-7 by Kansas State for the Big 12 championship.

With a chance to redeem themselves, the Sooners fell flat in the Sugar Bowl. The battered White looked little like a Heisman Trophy winner in the 21-14 loss to LSU.

The Sooners turned last year's failures into this season's motivation.

White returned for a sixth season and threw for 2,961 yards and 33 touchdowns, making a run at another Heisman.

A new star also emerged in Norman, Okla. Freshman Adrian Peterson has run for 1,843 yards and 15 touchdowns and finished second in the Heisman voting, just ahead of White.

"I'm not surprised to be (in the title game) my freshman season because I knew what I was coming into. I knew what kind of team I was coming to," Peterson said.

USC also lived up to its hype. The Trojans were an overwhelming preseason No. 1, despite losing several All-Americans from last year's title team.

The Trojans showed some flaws but they came down.

"A lot of people had us No. 1 at the start of the year, but didn't think we'd go undefeated," USC quarterback Matt Leinart said. "It says a lot about the kind of team we have."

Leinart's leadership and precise passing made him USC's second Heisman Trophy winner in three seasons. The left-hander who took over for 2002 Heisman winner Carson Palmer has thrown for 2,990 yards and 29 touchdowns.

Leinart was joined at the Heisman ceremony in New York by teammate Reggie Bush. The versatile and explosive tailback averages over 10 yards per touch with 15 TDs.

With Leinart on one side and White on the other, the ninth meeting between the Sooners and Trojans is not only the most important but it's a college football first. Never before have two players with Heismans faced off.

The Trojans are 5-2-1 against Oklahoma since 1956. The Sooners were ranked No. 1 when they played the Sooners, starting with the first matchup in 1963.

Source: LSU wants Miles

BY MARY FOSTER

The Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — Oklahoma coach Les Miles is the top choice to replace Nick Saban as LSU's football coach, a source close to the negotiations said Saturday.

Miles could be introduced as Saban's replacement early next week, the source said on the condition of anonymity. The source added that no other interviews had been set up.

Miles, who led Oklahoma State to three straight bowl games, emerged as the top candidate Saturday after Louisville coach Bobby Petrino withdrew from consideration.

LSU associate athletic director

Herb Vincent said "the field has obviously been narrowed."

Telephone messages left for Miles and his agent, George Bass, weren't immediately returned.

LSU spokesman Michael Bonnette, speaking at the Capital One Bowl in Orlando, Fla., where the Tigers lost to Iowa 30-25 in Saban's last game, would not comment on Miles. Bonnette said athletic director Skip Bertman was unavailable.

Oklahoma State spokesman Steve Buzzard said he knew nothing about the reports and had no further comment.

The LSU job opened when Saban took the head coaching job with the Miami Dolphins. The school hoped to complete the search quickly to allow the new

coach to immediately get involved with recruiting.

The process was delayed because the most prominent candidates were in bowl games or in the NFL.

Arkansas football coach Houston Nutt withdrew from consideration on Thursday.

LSU had hoped to interview Jacksonville Jaguars head coach Jack Del Rio, but the parties involved were apparently unable to set up the interview.

Miles is 28-21 in four seasons with the Cowboys, who had made just one bowl appearance in the 12 seasons before he arrived. His biggest wins came against the Cowboys' instate rival, Oklahoma, in his first two seasons.

On Wednesday, Oklahoma



Les Miles

State lost 37-7 to Ohio State in the Alamo Bowl.

Saban had the nation's richest college football contract, a seven-year, \$18.45 million deal he signed after winning a share of the national title in 2003. The school is completing a stadium expansion and a new football operations center.

Meyer wins coach of year award

The Associated Press

TEMPE, Ariz. — Utah's Urban Meyer received the Football Writers Association/Eddie Robinson coach of the year award Saturday after leading the Utes to a 12-0 season.

The honor was announced during the Utes' 35-7 victory over Pittsburgh in the Fiesta Bowl, the final piece in Utah's first perfect season since 1930.

The other finalists for the award — first presented in 1957 to Ohio State's Woody Hayes — were Southern California's Pete Carroll, Tommy Tuberville of Texas-El Paso, Iowa's Kirk Ferentz and California coach Jeff Tedford.

Meyer was 22-2 at Utah and guided the Utes to the first Bowl Championship Series game for a team from a conference without an automatic BCS berth.

Saturday's game was Meyer's last with the Utes. He was hired by Florida to replace the fired Ron Zook, but was allowed to coach Utah one last time.

Meyer will be presented with the award Sept. 3 in his Florida debut when the Gators host Wyoming.

A&M rewards Franchione with raise, extension

The Associated Press

DALLAS — Texas A&M coach Dennis Franchione will get a contract extension and a raise after leading Texas A&M to the Cotton Bowl in his second season.

Athletic director Bill Byrne said Saturday that Franchione's contract, currently worth \$1.7 million annually through 2010, was being restructured. He didn't release the details.

"He's done a great job with the talent we

have and I look forward to a great future at Texas A&M," Byrne said before the Aggies (7-5) finished their season with a 38-7 loss to Tennessee. "We want to make sure Dennis Franchione continues to coach our football team."

The deal is expected to be completed this month. Byrne would only say that Franchione would remain among the best-paid coaches in the country.

"It certainly provides continuity and pa-

trience for what we're trying to do, and understanding," Franchione said. "This is where we want to finish our coaching career, and where (wife) Kim and I want to be."

The Cotton Bowl was Texas A&M's first New Year's Day game in six years. The Aggies were 4-8 last season.

Texas A&M started this season with a 41-21 loss at Utah, then won six straight games before losing three of its last four. The Aggies still got their first Cotton Bowl berth since 1998, after Texas got into the BCS.

Florida looking for bright future with new discipline

By Mike Phillips

The Miami Herald

ATLANTA — The word on Urban Meyer is that he's a disciplinarian, a tough, hard-nosed coach who pushes his team.

He better be.

Meyer takes over the Florida Gators, who proved again in their 27-10 loss to Miami in Friday's Peach Bowl just how far they are from being what they could and should be.

The feeling at Florida is that this team has enough talent to make a run at the national title next season, but first the Gators must learn how to prepare for a big game.

They had another classic collapse in the Peach Bowl.

"We felt like we were prepared for this game. We thought we were ready," UF interim coach Charlie Strong said. "But we made too many mistakes, and we had too many penalties. And we gave up big plays."

Ron Zook lost his job because he couldn't win close games; his team lost three in the final minute this season. But the Gators weren't even close against Miami.

Sure, they dominated the Hurricanes statistically. The Gators had more first downs, more rushing yards, more passing yards and more time of possession. UF's offense finished with 406 yards to UM's 277.

But none of that meant anything because UF had one breakdown after another. The Gators moved inside the UM 25-yard line five times Friday, only to come away with three points. (UF's only



Florida's MacKenzie Pierre (85) consoles teammate Jeremy Mincey, left, after Florida's 27-10 loss to Miami in the Peach Bowl on Friday in Atlanta.

TD came on a 45-yard pass).

One first-quarter play seemed to epitomize UF's season, and illustrate why the Gators (7-5) struggled to win big games.

It was scoreless and Florida had just blocked a punt. The Gators had fourth-and-one at UM's 11-yard line. Unlike the ever-conservative Zook, Strong decided to go for the first down, and apparently he made the right call. Chris Leak

"With or without me, this team can win the national title. Coach Zook has left coach Meyer with the best talent in the nation."

Channing Crowder

Florida All-America linebacker

completed a pass to fullback Billy Latsko, who plunged to the 1-yard line.

But instead of giving the Gators first-and-goal, the play was wiped out by an illegal-motion penalty. Receiver Dallas Baker, in a moment of confusion, had come on the field for the fourth-down play and then run off, leaving UF with 10 players and drawing the flag.

Baker's mistake negated what would have been a touchdown, and it was the kind of gaffe that cost the Gators all season.

It was Baker who made a costly mistake in the final minutes of UF's 30-28 loss at Tennessee. Baker retaliated after a Tennessee player hit him, drawing a controversial personal-foul call that helped the Volunteers get into position for the winning field goal.

Had Baker not retaliated, UF likely would have won. Zook defended Baker, saying, "They always throw the flag on the player who retaliates, and Dallas knows better. He knows he shouldn't have retali-

ated."

Zook was right — it's tough not to retaliate. It takes discipline, and that seemed to be the missing ingredient all season for the Gators, who were embarrassed before the season by several arrests, then embarrassed again during the season when — according to a police report — Zook, standing with his players outside a frat house, cursed and threatened students.

The lack of discipline, silly mistakes and the defense's inability to stop SEC teams late in the game defined a season that saw Florida lose four games by a total of 19 points. The Gators went 1-4 against ranked teams, beating only Florida State in the regular-season finale.

"We can't make mistakes like that," Strong said.

This is the team Meyer inherits, a group many believe has the talent — if not the discipline yet — to win the national title.

Florida's talent is young, and even if All-American linebacker Channing Crowder leaves for the NFL as expected, the defense, which has been dominating, still returns 10 starters. The offense loses four starters — two offensive linemen; receiver O.J. Small, who led the SEC in receptions; and tailback Clifton Faison, who led the SEC in rushing.

"This team can be great next year," Faison said. "All they have to do is get rid of the mistakes and play hard. It seems we always put it in somebody else's hands."

Crowder said UF could be in next season's Rose Bowl title game.

"With or without me, this team can win the national title. Coach Zook has left coach Meyer with the best talent in the nation."

:0 just enough for No. 6 Texas

Walk-on's walk-off field goal gives Longhorns victory, vindication

BY JIM VERTUO

The Associated Press

PASADENA, Calif. — The kick wobbled. Everyone in the Rose Bowl waited.

Almost in slow motion, the ball floated over the crossbar. Then pandemonium.

With one kick off his right foot, Dusty Mangum had settled one and for all the debate over whether Texas deserved to be in the Rose Bowl.

Mangum's 37-yard field goal as time expired sent No. 6 Texas, behind a stellar effort by quarterback Vince Young, to a wild 38-37 victory over No. 13 Michigan on Saturday in the first matchup of two college football's elite programs.

With flashbulbs popping throughout the stadium, Mangum drilled the kick after Michigan had tried to ice him with its last two timeouts.

"I was hoping they would quit calling timeouts," Mangum, a walk-on senior, said. "It's something I've dreamed about. To come down to a pressure kick — why not?"

"We came out here to Pasadena with a mission," he said.

It was the kind of ending Texas coach Mack Brown wanted. There will never be a better game in the Rose Bowl," Brown said. "You had two of the top four winningest programs and it should come down to two seconds left."

While his players ran around the field celebrating, Brown gave Mangum a hug for giving him the biggest victory in his seven seasons at Texas.

"I told him he was the luckiest human being in the world," Brown said. "He just said, 'Coach,

I love you and thank you for bringing me to Texas.'"

All week, Brown and his Texas players were barraged by questions about their worthiness to play in a Bowl Championship Series game.

The Longhorns (11-1) earned their trip West when they leapfrogged fourth-ranked California in the final BCS standings, helped by Brown's public pleas.

"I don't think we'll ever answer all the critics in sports," Brown said. "It's amazing to me the last three years when Texas was left out."

"Cal had a great team. My destination was to be in a BCS, in my estimation, but I don't think anybody who really knows football is questioning whether Texas should be here," he said.

Michigan tailback Cedric Benson certainly has something to say whoever that might be now.

"I think we shut the critics up," he said. "Let's see what they say now."

Young ran for 192 yards and four touchdowns, passed for 180 yards and a score and drove the Longhorns to the winning kick.

Michigan freshman quarterback Chad Henne tied a Rose Bowl record with four touchdown passes, three to All-American wide receiver Brayton Edwards. Garret Rivas kicked three field goals, the last a 42-yarder that squeezed just inside the right upright with 3:04 left to give Michigan a 37-35 lead.

By snapping Cal, Texas also crashed the Rose Bowl's long-standing tradition that the "Granddaddy" of bowl games pits a Pac-10 team against the Big Ten champ.

Michigan (9-3) has the most victories in college football with 842



Texas lineman Derek Lokyer celebrates the Longhorns' last-second, 38-37 victory over Michigan in the Rose Bowl on Saturday.

and Texas is third with 787. And while it took more than 100 years for them to meet on the field, their first was a doozy.

With Young's razzle-dazzle on touchdown runs of 20, 60 and 23 yards and Henne's scoring throws to Edwards, the game was an offensive showcase that simply came down to who had the ball last.

"I was just going out and doing my thing," Young said. "I'll see a hole, I run the ball."

Michigan's Steve Breaston set a Rose Bowl record with 315 all-purpose yards, breaking the mark of 276 set by O.J. Simpson in 1969.

The Wolverines nearly spoiled it for Texas, but Young simply wouldn't let them.



Michigan's Leon Hall (29) and Texas' Limas Sweed collide while going for a pass during the third quarter of Saturday's Rose Bowl game.

Michigan was vulnerable against mobile quarterbacks all season and didn't come close to containing Young, who calls his ability to avoid tacklers in the open field the "Texas Two-Step."

"He was tough to tackle, but we should have gotten to him several times," Michigan coach Lloyd Carr said. "I was disappointed with the loss and with the tackling."

Young ran for a TD and passed for one in the first half, and Henne matched him with two scoring strikes to Edwards that made it 14-14 at halftime.

The fun had only just begun.

Young's second TD was a longer version of his first. Dropping back to pass, he took a quick read of the field then took off. He shook off a tackle 15 yards upfield and then outraced All-America

safety Ernest Shazor to the end zone to make it 21-14.

Breaston, who gave the Wolverines good field position with his kick returns all afternoon, brought the ball out to the 50. Three plays later, he hauled in a pass from Henne and sprinted the end zone, driving for the pylon to make it 21-all.

By early in the third quarter, Texas had taken the lead three times only to have Michigan tie it. The Wolverines took their first lead when Henne hit Edwards from 9 yards out and stretched it to 31-21 when Rivas kicked a 44-yard field goal.

After Rivas' field goal made it 34-28, Young scrambled again for the end zone, leaving the Wolverines either punching the air in frustration or bending over and gasping for breath as Texas took a 35-34 lead.

Unbelievable game-winning catch mirrors Iowa's season

BY TODD DVORAK

The Associated Press

OKLAHOMA, Fla. — Warren Holloway's game-winning catch that lifted Iowa to a stunning victory over LSU on Saturday was a fitting end to the Hawkeyes' impressive season.

On the last play of the game, Holloway grabbed Drew Tate's desperation heave and dashed into the end zone as time expired, lifting No. 11 Iowa to a 30-25 victory over the Tigers in the Capital One Bowl.

The play will surely be etched in Hawkeyes lore. It also cemented Iowa's third straight season with 10 or more victories, back-to-back January bowl victories and spoiled Nick Saban's send-off as LSU coach.

Not bad for a senior who had never caught a TD pass, and a team with the nation's worst rushing game.

"This has been a pretty unusual year in a lot of regards," said

coach Kirk Ferentz, who guided his team to a 10-2 record and a share of the Big Ten title, the second in three years.

"The resiliency these guys have shown week in and week out is hard to put into words. For this thing to end today the way it did is probably pretty fitting."

Holloway's improbable catch also ended the book on the Saban era at LSU.

Saban will take over this week as coach of the Miami Dolphins, a team suffering through its worst season since the 1960s.

After arriving in Baton Rouge in late 1999, Saban instantly turned around a program that compiled a 7-15 record the previous two seasons.

Under Saban, the Tigers won 48 games — the best five-year run in school history — earned two SEC titles and won the 2003 BCS championship with a 21-14 victory over Oklahoma in the Sugar Bowl.

The Tigers (9-3) nearly gave Saban a farewell to savor.

LSU rallied from a 12-point deficit in the fourth quarter, and took the lead in the final minute when backup quarterback JaMarcus Russell tossed a 3-yard TD pass, his second of the quarter, to Skyler Green, putting the Tigers up 25-24 with 46 seconds left.

Four plays later, Tate spoiled the fun, throwing a 56-yard perfect strike to Holloway, who was wide open down the middle thanks to a coverage breakdown in the LSU secondary.

"The disappointing thing here is that the last 14 seconds of this game tarnishes what a lot of good football players and seniors on this team have been able to accomplish in their career," said Saban, who is expected to be replaced by Oklahoma State Les Miles.

As they did last season, the Hawkeyes found ways to beat LSU despite a rushing game that will be remembered as one of the worst in school history.

Averaging a meager 75 rushing yards per game, Iowa turned to special teams, a stout run defense and Tate, a first-year quarterback with a knack for making big plays.

A blocked punt by backup safety Miguel Merrick in the second quarter — Iowa's second of the game and fifth blocked kick of the year — led to a second touchdown.

Aside from Alley Broussard's 74-yard TD run late in the second quarter, Iowa's defense shut down the Tigers' ground game, which averaged 200 yards during the season.

Tate was chosen as bowl MVP after going 20-for-32 for 287 yards and two touchdowns, the other a 57-yarder to Clinton Solomon in the first quarter.

"For the game to go the way it went, with a lot of people contributing and different areas of our football team making big plays ... it's just a tremendous team effort," Ferentz said.



Iowa's Warren Holloway (86) breaks away from LSU's Travis Daniels on the way to the game-winning score in Saturday's Capital One Bowl.

SPORTS



Wade is spectacular in Heat's
14th straight victory,
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Vikings back into postseason

Minnesota into playoffs despite loss

BY JOSEPH WHITE
The Associated Press

LANDOVER, Md. — Once again, the Minnesota Vikings collapsed under the weight of late-season pressure.

How, then, will they be able to handle postseason pressure? They'll get a chance to find out. The Vikings qualified for the playoffs Sunday despite a 500 record and a second straight December swoon. With a chance to secure a berth on their own, they played an uptight 21-18 loss to the Washington Redskins and clinched their spot only because New Orleans beat Carolina.

"This team's going to drive me crazy," said coach Mike Tice, in the playoffs for the first time since taking over from Dennis Green during the 2001 season.

"You spend the whole week trying to make sure they understand that you don't want to get yourself too worked up or too uptight, and you don't want to go out and play like you can't make a mistake. When you play like that, you go out and make mistakes."

And mistakes there were, enough to make any coach cringe. Jeff Dugan killed a first-half



KURT

Washington wide receiver Taylor Jacobs (84) dives past Minnesota defenders Willie Offord (24) and Brian Russell (27) during a 45-yard reception in the fourth quarter of the Redskins 21-18 victory over the Vikings on Sunday at FedEx Field in Landover, Maryland.

drive with a false-start penalty on third-and-goal at the 1-yard line. Nate Burleson dropped a sure touchdown pass deep over the middle in the fourth quarter. Randy Moss had a juggling long

touchdown pass in the second half negated by a holding penalty on right tackle Adam Goldberg.

The Vikings finished 8-8, losing seven of their last 10 after a 5-1 start. Last year, they fell from 6-0

to 9-7 and were eliminated by a touchdown pass on the last play of the season in an 18-17 loss to Arizona. Tice jokingly referred to himself as "Coach Collapse" last week in an effort to lighten the

mood. Now he has to come up with a new play for next week-end's playoff game at Green Bay.

"Most people say we backed

SEE VIKINGS ON PAGE 34



**Meyer departs Utah
after perfect season**

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**Undefeated Auburn
on outside looking in**

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**Improbable last-play TD
fitting ending for Iowa**

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ROSE BOWL GAME



**FG as time expires
vindicates Texas**

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No. 17 N.C. State handed another lopsided loss Page 30

